



# CITEMAR 6

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MID-YEAR ISSUE 2021



# A SMARTER MARINE CORPS!



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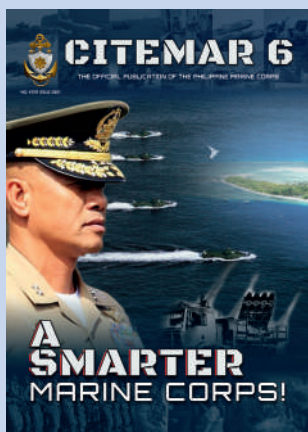
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## ABOUT THE COVER

The Philippine Marine Corps, designed to be the Seaborne-Warfighting unit as ground combat instrument of Naval Power in the current and future naval and joint operating environment, is gearing to become a more relevant and more responsive unit of the AFP.

The Marine Operating Concept 2021 defines how Marine Operating Forces (MOFs) perform their role in Territorial Defense Operation. With the pivot to external defense, the Corps translated its operational approaches to an Archipelagic Coastal Defense as the overarching concept on how the Marines should operate.

Through the guidance of the Commandant, the Philippine Marine Corps is now focusing on the development of four major capabilities – national maneuver amphibious force capability, coastal defense capability, special operation capability, and HADR operation capability – to support the mission of the Philippine Navy. This concept is being implemented in all Marine units within the operational and tactical level through the SMARTER Marine Corps model scheme.

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UPERIOR IN WAR-FIGHTING  
CAPABILITIES

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ISSION-FOCUSED ALWAYS

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PPRECIATED BY THE GENERAL  
PUBLIC AND CO-WORKERS  
IN THE AFP

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ELEVANT AND RESPONSIVE  
TO THE DEFENSE AND  
SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

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RAINING, TRAINING, TRAINING

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EVER EVOLVING WITH THE  
REQUIREMENTS OF  
THE BATTLESPACE

R

ESPECTED ORGANIZATION

**MARINES**



Message from the  
**COMMANDANT**  
Philippine Marine Corps

**T**he first half of the year resulted in the achievement of significant milestones for the Corps along with my guidance of setting a SMARTER Marine Corps. I commend our frontline and support units for constantly exerting the extra effort in ensuring that our respective tasks are accomplished in support of the overall Philippine Navy mission.

It is also with great pride that I convey to you that the recent publication of our Archipelagic Coastal Defense (ACD) Concept has rippled throughout the AFP. It defines our gradual shift to new roles and capabilities, particularly in Coastal Defense. It also clearly states that we shall be a complementary part of the bigger defense structure of our country. In line with this, it is also important that we consider the other requirements such as review and enhancement of our Force Design, the continuous development of our present and future bases, and improvement of our warfighting capabilities.

The ongoing COVID Pandemic has also affected our mission performance. Always stay safe and ensure all IATF protocols are always observed. Moreover, all Marines are reminded to always adhere to our safety protocols, especially during travel. I am also glad to announce that our Marine Cooperative (MARCOOP) is revitalizing itself to provide better financial services for our personnel. I encourage everyone to patronize our cooperative to help it grow and prosper.

I would like to personally thank our Editorial Board, Staff, Contributors, and personnel of the Marine Corps Public Affairs Office (MCPAO) for all the hard work in making sure that this publication is completed on time and of the best quality.

Once again, let us all do our best towards a **SMARTER MARINE CORPS!**

  
**ARIEL R. CACULITAN**  
Major General PN(M)

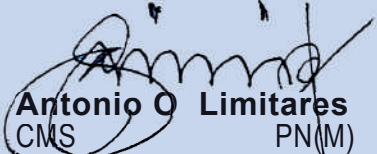


Message from the  
**COMMAND  
SERGEANT MAJOR**  
Philippine Marine Corps

**W**e in the Philippine Marine Corps demonstrate utmost resilience and adaptability to respond to unanticipated circumstances and emerging needs. While our recent actions focused on increasing our tactical readiness, we are now improving our strategic readiness in support of the mission of the Naval and Joint Forces for archipelagic defense. Significantly, the PMC conceptualized the Archipelagic Coastal Defense aimed at supporting other security agencies and security forces in the conduct of maritime law enforcement operations in coastal waters, border control operations, other constabulary functions in coastal zones, and humanitarian aid and disaster response. The continuity of priorities and leadership focus is critical in achieving the PMC Vision: “By 2028, PMC shall be our maritime nation’s highly capable amphibious force-in-readiness for the archipelagic defense that brings pride and lasting inspiration to our people”.

As the Command Sergeant Major of the PMC, it is with pride to lead the enlisted corps’ voices in support of modernizing and reshaping the corps. We are now creating more opportunities for education and training for enlisted Marines to empower them to be more proactive members of the PMC and narrow the capability gap.

Modernizing the PMC in accordance with the Command Guidance for SMARTER Marines certainly builds a more effective and lethal force able to fulfill its defense and security mandate. I am optimistic that with our strong commitment to serve and be the best, we are able to optimize our strengths and capabilities and achieve our shared vision.



**Antonio O. Limitares**  
CMS PN(M)



# **SUPERIOR IN WARFIGHTING CAPABILITIES**

"WE MUST CONTINUE TO  
ENHANCE OUR SPECIALTY  
TO ADAPT TO OUR DYNAMIC  
MARITIME ENVIRONMENT THAT IS  
VOLATILE, UNCERTAIN, COMPLEX,  
AMBIGUOUS, AND DISRUPTIVE."





## **MARINE AMPHIBIOUS READY UNIT: REALIZING THE VISION TO BE THE MARITIME NATION'S HIGHLY CAPABLE AMPHIBIOUS FORCE-IN-READINESS**

By: Marine Battalion Landing Team-9

The Armed Forces of the Philippines' (AFP) strategic approaches provide specific guidance on how to attain national military objectives. The Philippine Navy (PN) and the Philippine Marine Corps (PMC) align with these strategic approaches in order to attain and sustain sovereignty in its maritime domain.

The Navy's role of conducting prompt and sustained naval and maritime operations in support of the AFP's mission requires highly mobile and highly capable forces that can perform traditional and non-traditional roles. The capabilities of the Fleet-Marine Forces answer the key requirements and provide flexibility options in the conduct of various maneuvers. This led to the formal activation of the PN's Amphibious Ready Force (ARF) as the naval maneuver component of the AFP composed of Fleet-Marine Forces with the Marine Amphibious Ready Unit (MARU) as its marine component. With the increase in the amphibious capability of the Navy through the AFP's Modernization Program, it necessitates to fully capacitate its marine component that is rapid, amphibious, hard-hitting, joint, combined, and inter-agency ready.

Through the years, Marine Battalion Landing Teams (MBLTs) have been focusing on land-based missions and in support of land operations. This has somehow diverted the

Marines from its purpose that is naval in character and sea-based by nature.

The concept of MARU emanates from fleet-marine operations requiring the integration and coordination of capabilities and assets of the two types of command of PN. This interoperability will produce seamless movements and maneuvers during seaborne operations for both internal and external defense. Said concept will dwell on naval operations. As a MARU, it shall perform missions as naval force projection ashore and as part of the chokepoint defense, therefore, bringing the Marines back to its main purpose and objective.

To jumpstart the transition of an MBLT into a MARU, the 9th Marine Battalion of the Philippine Marine Corps had undergone retraining and refurbishing in 2020 following the experimental training module that concentrated on seaborne maneuvers, sustained maneuvers ashore, and humanitarian assistance and disaster response for multinational engagements and cooperation. The training also helped to strengthen the innate character of Marines as a hard-hitting seaborne force that can be rapidly deployed anywhere in the country to support the mission of the naval and joint forces of the Unified Commands and the AFP as a whole.



The retraining phase was designed in such a way that the MARU's line companies will be specialized to perform amphibious operations using different platforms such as small boats (for assault boat company), the newly acquired Amphibious Assault Vehicles or AAVs (for the amphibious mechanized company), and medium-lift air assets (for helicopter assault company). In view of the concept of integration and/or combined arms, service support units and special operations units (SpecOps) were also integrated into MARU during and after its training phase. This includes an AAV component, LAR component, 105 Howitzer component, Force Recon component, Motor Transport component, Assault Boat component, Service Support component (CEIS, Medical, EOD/K9), and Military Intelligence component. These capabilities, when fully integrated and utilized to their optimal capacity, will give the higher-level commanders a wider variety and range of operational strategy to accomplish their missions in their respective areas of operation.

The MARU, as part of the future-oriented and long-term approach of the PMC, requires a great amount of support, continuous planning and training, and evaluation in order to achieve its full capacity and sustainment.

From concept to capability development and continuous assessment in all levels of Force Integration, the PMC has been painstakingly working to address the challenges and gaps that are being and will be confronted

in the creation, development, and sustainment of the MARU. To fully develop the knowledge, skills, and attitude of the MARU and to further enhance its interoperability and cohesiveness, it shall undergo continuous training, especially in joint and combined exercises. This will further improve and maintain a high level of readiness, responsiveness, and coordination. In 2020, the MARU was committed to different military exercises such as PAGESASAMA, PAGBUBUKLOD, DAGIT-PA, and PAGESISIKAP. Said exercises helped the MARU assess the different areas of capability/skills needing improvement. In the BALIKATAN 2021, the MARU once again participated in order to test its interoperability with its US counterpart and to learn and exchange insights on how to be more effective and efficient in amphibious operations and joint operations.

Though many challenges and gaps were identified in the process of this transformation, integration, and operation, the Command is doing its best to address everything in order for the MARU to become highly capable, competent, and effective as it will embody the Corps' contribution in winning the country's future wars. The MARU is another milestone for the Corps as it brings to reality the AFP's vision of a world-class Armed Forces, source of national pride.

(Source: MARU Capability Development Plan)





# SELFLESS SERVICE OF THE SEABORNE STRIKING FORCE

The Philippine Marines is an elite amphibious unit that is responsive and readily deployable regardless of terrain, weather, and other circumstances. Though unspoken, many of our Marines are deployed on isolated islands and endure living without the necessities that we often take for granted. They imbibe military professionalism by submitting their own free will to a law of perpetual constraint. Each Marine knows in their heart that there are many challenges in life as a Marines, that discomfort is normal, and that selfless service to the Filipino Nation is the prime objective.

In the southernmost part of the Philippine archipelago lies the Province of Tawi-Tawi, where numerous successful battles have already taken place, making it the most peaceful area that the Philippine Marines secures to sustain that gain. Under the 2nd Marine Brigade, there are two Battalions – Marine Battalion Landing Team-6 and Marine Battalion Landing Team-12 that cover 11 municipalities of Tawi-Tawi.

The 26th Marine Company, MBLT-6 has a detachment situated at Sitio Baabag Sahasa, Barangay Darul Akram, Languyan, Tawi-Tawi, more commonly known as “Pearl Bank.” People on the island live without electricity and telecommunication signals and use rainwater for drinking and other personal necessities. It has approximately 88.58 KM aerial distance from capital town Bongao and takes 10 hours of travel by a wooden boat called “lantsa.”

Dependent on weather, the trips usually occur once a month with the main purpose of transporting dried fish or “daing,” which is the main source of income of the locals.

The island has been known to be once a pearl-producing farm but now serves as a stop-over for lawless elements that journey through the waters to smuggle goods and drugs, even transporting kidnapped victims of the Abu Sayyaf Group.

As an area of interest, this place is manned by Marines, who ensure that no lawless elements pass by while security the community. Beyond their mandated task, these Marines look beyond and contribute to supporting towards national development by helping the community in whatever way they can. While they bring order and sustain peace, they perform the roles of doctors and teachers in the absence of these professionals. Residents knock on the door of the detachment to ask for medicines, first-aid, and even for minor surgical operations. The Marines also have been one of the only teachers on the island that teach in two classrooms of four grade levels. They also help make tables and chairs for the students. Being “jack of all trades”, the Marines provide their all-out support for the community.

This is what makes us different. The simple joy of seeing the smiles of the locals is what motivates us to keep doing what we do as much as we can. Through this selfless service, a Marine knows that he has contributed to the accomplishment of the mission of the Corps. This is also in line with our vision to be our *Maritime Nation's Highly Capable Amphibious Force-in-Readiness for Archipelagic Defense that Brings Pride and Lasting Inspiration to our People by 2028.*

As Marines, we shall always be known as the Seaborne Striking force that give selfless service to the Filipino people.



*2Lt. Lourdes Victoria D. Sison PNUM, 1<sup>st</sup> Platoon Commander,  
26<sup>th</sup> Marine Company Marine Battalion Landing Team-6*



# MARU AT THE FOREFRONT OF HADR OPERATIONS IN CATANDUANES

In support of the Marine Corps' thrust to provide humanitarian aid and disaster response (HADR), the Marine Amphibious Ready Unit (MARU) was first to be deployed to assist the victims of Typhoon Rolly. On the 16th of November 2020, the MARU contingent represented by the 39th Marine Company with its Service Support Elements composed of one Officer and 43 enlisted personnel embarked on a mission aboard Philippine Navy ship LD 601 (BRP TARLAC) to transport assorted relief goods and materials, as well as personnel and equipment necessary for the rehabilitation of the island province of Catanduanes.

The province was declared under a state of calamity after Super Typhoon Rolly hit the province on November 01, 2020 with five deaths and almost 10,000 families left homeless. According to the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council, at least 65% of the houses, structures, and facilities in the province were destroyed, while 70% of the electrical supply was affected. All communication facilities were also damaged including the PAGASA Weather Radar Station that provides timely weather updates. Most of the major roads were blocked with debris and landslide making it difficult to reach some communities. The mountain hills suffered from landslide and trees and vegetation were almost wiped out. The abaca industry, which is one of the basic sources of income in the province, was heavily affected.

The Marines exerted their joint efforts with Sailors and Seabees counterparts aboard BRP TARLAC in disembarking the relief goods and other materials at San Andres Port in Catanduanes. The spirit of camaraderie and brotherhood was overwhelming as the troops did their part in helping the people. The deployment of Marines and Seabees provided hope and boosted the morale of the typhoon victims as they were handed with relief goods and other basic supplies. The Marines also cleared major roads of obstacles and debris to facilitate direct access to prime commodities in the area. Likewise, the troops provided security and manpower assistance in the recovery of some infrastructures like the NFA Complex in Virac, Catanduanes. These combined efforts on relief assistance and partial rehabilitation by the Marines and Naval Construction Brigade of the Philippine Navy benefitted 21 barangays and six strategic locations within two months of deployment. The local communities were grateful for the efforts made by the troops in reaching out to them.

Truly, the Philippine Marine Corps has proven that in times of calamities, it is a reliable force that stands ready to serve at any given time and circumstance. Guided by its core values, the Philippine Marine Corps has always been SMARTER in its actions whenever and whatever situation it could be.

*2Lt. Clarence Delfie M. Gajito Jr. PN(M), Platoon Commander,  
39<sup>th</sup> Marine Company, Marine Battalion Landing Team-9*



# FLEET-MARINE CONDUCTS JOINT INTELLIGENCE WORKSHOP

The Philippine Marine Corps and the Philippine Fleet, through the office of the Marine Corps Intelligence (MC2) and the Philippine Fleet Intelligence (PF2), spearheaded the conduct of a three-day PMC-PF Intelligence Workshop from March 01 to 03 2021 aimed to (a) execute the activities of the PMC-PF Staff to Staff Tasks; (b) execute the Plans and Programs of the Intelligence Working Committee; and (c) produce tangible output for the synchronization of naval intelligence in support of amphibious operation management and collaboration.

The PMC-PF Intelligence Workshop is one of the approved activities of the PMC-PF Staff to Staff Talks conducted on September 24 to 28, 2020 under the Intelligence Working Committee. The PMC-PF Staff to Staff Talks is being conducted by the two type commands since 2012 and was finally institutionalized in 2017. The Philippine Navy key leaders appreciate the importance of the conduct of PMC-PF Staff to Staff Talks as it encourages integration within the Philippine Navy, especially when it comes to Fleet-Marine operations.

The intelligence workshop was attended by intelligence officers and personnel from the PMC and the PF with representatives from the Naval Meteorological and Oceanographic Center (NAVMETOC), Naval Special Operations Command (NAVSOCOM), Naval Air Wing (NAW) as SMEs, and representatives from the office of the Philippine Navy Intelligence (N2) as observers. To level off the understanding of the workshop participants, lectures were presented by SMEs as follows: Beach Landing Site Operation by LCdr. Kiram T. Sadava PN; Operation Design, Planning, and Assessment by Col. Francisco Domingo R. Fernandez PN(M)(GSC); Intelligence Integration and Intelligence Support to Amphibious Operation by Col. Romulo D. Quemado II PN(M)(GSC); Hydrographic Surveying by LCdr. Allan I. Noveno PN; and Concept of Employment of the Marine Amphibious Ready Unit (MARU) by Maj. Ian R. Villeza PN(M).

After the series of lectures, the participants of the workshop were able to understand that currently, the PMC-PF intelligence is still not fully integrated to effectively support naval operations specifically amphibious operations. The identified gap in PMC-PF intelligence integration stems from a myriad of factors including differences in organizational culture, lack of updated doctrines, and inadequate training, among others. To address the identified gap, the participants came up with a proposal for the creation

UNCLASSIFIED

**Fleet-Marine Intelligence Integration**

**Proposed Fleet-Marine Intelligence Committee**

|                                | Fleet                         | Marines                        |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Chairman/Co Chairman           | AC of FS for Intelligence, F2 | AC of MS for Intelligence, MC2 |
| Vice Chairman-Co Vice Chairman | Deputy F2                     | Deputy MC2                     |
| Members                        | SAP 2                         | Operations, MCBN               |
|                                | LCF 2                         | FRG 2                          |
|                                | SO 2                          | SZ, CDR                        |
|                                | NAVMETOC (SME)                | G2, CSSB                       |
|                                | NAVSOCOM (SME)                | SZ, HCBN                       |
|                                | NA2, NAW (SME)                | MGFDC 2                        |
|                                | NITI (SME)                    |                                |
|                                | NISF (SME)                    |                                |

Figure 1. Proposed Fleet-Marine Intelligence Committee

of the Fleet-Marine Intelligence Committee along with a proposed Fleet-Marine Intelligence Integration Framework. If approved, the proposed Fleet-Marine Intelligence Committee shall be responsible for implementing the proposed activities per Line of Efforts (LOE) of the Fleet-Marine Intelligence Framework. Also included in the output of the workshop is the Fleet-Marine Intelligence Committee Balanced Scorecard with its corresponding Portfolio of Initiatives. In addition, the workshop also resulted in the initial crafting of the Intelligence Support to Amphibious Operations template, which is an important planning tool in integrating Fleet-Marine intelligence in each phase of an amphibious operation.

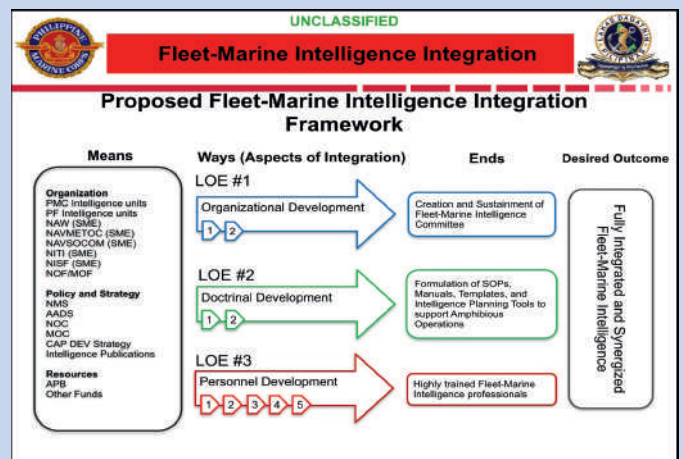


Figure 2. Proposed Fleet-Marine Intelligence Integration Framework

The PMC-PF Intelligence Workshop is a good venue for sustaining the good working relationship between the two types of commands of the Philippine Navy that originated from the PMC-PF Staff to Staff Talks. The output of the workshop may not be the ultimate solution that could fully integrate and synergize Fleet-Marine intelligence; nevertheless, it is a necessary step that if sustained, will have a great overall impact on the development of the Fleet-Marine intelligence in the long run.



*Cpt. Ian Dexter R. Carin PN(M),  
Chief Operation Branch, MC2*



# MISSION FOCUSED ALWAYS

"WE MUST ALIGN ALL OUR  
EFFORTS, BIG AND SMALL,  
WITH OUR OVERALL MISSION."





## EIGHT COMMUNIST TERRORIST GROUP/ MILITIANG BAYAN MEMBERS SURRENDER IN CAGAYAN

By: Marine Battalion Landing Team-10

On February 12, 2021, eight Communist Terrorist Group (CTG)/Militiang Bayan (MB) members from the Northern Front Committee of the Kilusang Rehiyon Cagayan Valley (KR-CV) voluntarily surrendered to the Naval Task Group Fleet-Marine Cagayan (NTG FMC)/Marine Battalion Landing Team-10 in Sta Ana, Cagayan. The surrender was made possible through the joint intelligence operations and heightened efforts of the Provincial Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (PTF-ELCAC) in Cagayan headed by Gov. Manuel M. Mamba with its multi-sectoral and interagency initiatives to end insurgency.

Lt. Col. Rowan L. Rimas PN(M)(GSC), the Commander of NTG FMC and the Commanding Officer of MBLT-10, informed the surrenderers that there are various government programs such as the Enhanced – Comprehensive Local Integration Program (E-CLIP) intended for former rebels who wish to lay down their arms. The E-CLIP includes benefits such as free education for themselves and their children, housing, medical and legal assistance and, livelihood programs. Moreover, Lt. Col. Rimas informed the surrenderers that they will receive remuneration once they surrender their firearms and ammunition.

*“Dahil sa kanilang (NPA) mga salita, nagtiwala kami sa kanila kahit hindi namin sila nakikita. Mula sa mga taong tumulong at nagdala sa amin dito sa base ng Marines upang ilahad at kilalanin ang aming kahinaan sa gobyerno, kami po ay narito at kusang magpapakumbaba. Lubos ang aming pasasalamat sa lahat ng pagtitiyaga at pagmamahal po ninyo. Hiling ko po na sana ganito kabuti ang mga ahensya ng gobyerno lalo sa aming mga dating armado upang sa*

*ganun ay mahikayat ang mga dati naming kasamahan na patuloy na nagtatago sa kabundukan na bumaba na at makipagtulungan sa ating pamahalaan dahil nakikita na natin ang pagbabago. Narito na po ang pagbabago lalo sa mga uniformed troops”,* exclaimed one of the former rebels supporting the government’s efforts while exposing the lies and atrocities of the CTGs. The voluntary surrender of these former rebels is a result of massive anti-insurgency campaign of the government and the former rebels’ enlightenment from years of deception within their ranks. The former rebels appealed for unity and encouraged those who are still on the wrong path to surrender and abandon their winless ideological fights and useless armed struggle. They also expressed willingness to work with the government in convincing their former comrades to lay down their arms and surrender for the betterment of their families and the community.

The E-CLIP, along with other government programs for former rebels, is a strong testament that President Rodrigo Roa Duterte and the NTF-ELCAC are sincere and aggressive in finally putting an end to the decades-long insurgency in the country. It is one of the ways for the government to welcome back these former rebels and enable them to live a normal life and be productive members of mainstream society.

Meanwhile, the influx of CTG/MB members surrendering to Cagayan PTF-ELCAC is an indication that there is a strong community support among Cagayanos to end insurgency. The peace-loving Cagayanos have served as the eyes and ears of the operating units and they continue to expel the terrorists and protect their communities.



# MNLF DECLARES ASG PERSONA NON GRATA, LGU TURNS OVER LOOSE FIREARMS TO MBLT-7

By: 1Lt. Marissa R. Guisihan PN(M)

The unifying efforts among the Peace Inclined Armed Groups (PIAGs), Local Government Units (LGUs), government agencies, non-government organizations, Philippine National Police (PNP), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), and the different sectors in our community indeed play a significant role in our campaign against violent extremism in the area of operations. We capitalize on the importance and effectiveness of the whole-of-nation approach as key in combating terrorism and achieving inclusive growth and sustainable development in Lupah Sug.

As part of our peace-building initiatives, the Marine Battalion Landing Team-7 (MBLT-7), together with the base commanders of the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF) under Commander Ali Julkipli and LGU of Kalingalan Caluang Sulu, formally held its Peace Covenant Signing declaring Abu Sayyaf Group as “persona non grata” in all MNLF camps and communities in the Municipality of Kalingalan Caluang. The covenant signing was held at the Headquarters, Marine Battalion Landing Team-7 on January 19, 2021.

The activity was presided by Col. Hernanie S. Songano PN(M)(GSC), Commander, 4th Marine Brigade,

and witnessed by Hon. Mayor Nurshamier A. Halun and representatives of the PNP.

Meanwhile, to further support the peace and order campaign in the municipality, Mayor Halun, together with barangay officials Hon. Abdulla Suwaib T. Caluang (Karungdong) and Hon. Sasad Madjuri (Kambing), facilitated the voluntary turnover of loose/unlicensed firearms to this unit. These included one (1) M1 Garand Cal. 30 rifle, one (1) homemade 12-gauge shotgun, and one (1) homemade GL40MM M79. These firearms are now under the custody of MBLT-7 for disposition and safekeeping.

Lt. Col. Eduard C. Olaso PN(M), Commanding Officer of MBLT-7, welcomes MNLF’s denouncement of ASG in their communities as it gives a clear message that MNLF is one with the LGU and AFP in establishing and maintaining peace and order in Kalingalan Caluang. Indeed, our concerted efforts significantly contribute to attaining the objectives of our campaign against violent extremism and to strengthening our peace initiatives and programs.



# ASG SUPPORTER YIELDS TO MARINES IN SULU

By: Cpt. Maria Rowena B. Dalmacio PN(M)

An Abu Sayyaf supporter yields to the members of the Marines through Marine Battalion Landing Team-8 under 4th Marine Brigade at Headquarters 4th Marine Brigade, Brgy. Tandubato, Luuk, Sulu on April 10, 2021 at one o'clock in the afternoon.

Rawan Awang is a resident of Sitio Buh, Brgy. Sucuban, Omar, Sulu and is a known gunsmith who repairs guns of the group of ASG Sub-Leader Sansibar Bencio and the late ASG member Mersun Awalon who was neutralized in September 2020. He is also a supplier of a voluminous amount of Methamphetamine Hydrochloride locally known as “shabu” in Omar, Luuk and Kalingalang Caluang, all of Sulu.

Awang was the subject of the joint law enforcement operations conducted by the PDEA; PIU, Sulu PPO and 4th Marine Brigade through MBLT-8 and 62nd Force Recon Company last March 25, 2021 wherein the operating troops recovered gunsmith tools, gun parts and 12 grams of shabu amounting to Php 81,600.00.

According to him, he voluntarily surrendered along with his M16 Rifle, 4 magazines, and 18 rounds live ammos

in fear for his life and his family. He is thankful that the government gave him a chance to be with his family and pledged that he would be bothering the peace and stability of his municipality.

“We accept those who seek for a second chance and we are also thankful that Awang realized that life is more important than getting money from illegal activities. I hope that this will serve as a stern warning to those who think of conducting atrocities in the 2nd District of Sulu,” stated by Col. Hernanie S. Songano PN(M)(GSC), the Commander of 4th Marine Brigade as he turns over the custody of the said surrenderee to the concerned barangay officials.

“The chance given to live in peace as we envision progress should not be wasted. The members of MBLT-8 will stand for the government as we work with the local authorities, and other security sectors in maintaining peace and order in the area. Let us not waste what we have started. We can already see progress, let’s work together to attain it”, said Lt. Col. Abdulmoel A Alamia PN(M), the Commanding Officer of MBLT-8.







# MARINE BATTALION LANDING TEAM-6



**MAJAN SAHIDJUAN "APO MIKE"**

## INSIDE STORY: THE NEUTRALIZATION OF ASG SUBLEADER APO MIKE

By: Lt. Col. Venjie P. Pendon PN(M)

"The best source of intelligence will always be HUMINT, that's where the Marine Intelligence excels."

On January 17, 2020, Indonesian fishermen were abducted at Tambisan, Lahad Datu, Sabah, Malaysia. The kidnap victims identified as Arshad Bin Dahlan, Arizal Kastamiran, Riswanto Bin Hayono, and La Baa were brought to Sulu Province by their captors and were transferred to Indanan-based Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) under the leadership of the notorious ASG-SL MAJAN SAHIDJUAN @ APO MIKE. After the continued military operation in the province of Sulu, La Baa was killed in September 2020 when he was caught in a firefight between his captors and the government forces while the remaining kidnap victims, together with 15-year old Indonesian kidnap victim named Khairuldin, were moved to various locations by the group of Apo Mike.

Military efforts to rescue the Indonesian kidnap victims drove the ASG deeper into the jungles of Sulu and they eluded pursuit operations due to their mastery of the terrain. They maintained their numerous supply lines because of several supporters on the ground. The ASG has also mastered navigating the waters of Western Mindanao using indigenous watercraft, which are readily available in the area.

### Clear and Present Danger

The AFP operations forced the ASG with their kidnap victims out of the jungles of Sulu and off to Tawi-Tawi. On March 18, 2021, information was relayed by

BGen. Arturo G. Rojas PN(M), Commander 2nd Marine Brigade, to verify the unvalidated report regarding the presence of the rescued Indonesian kidnap victims in Tandubas Municipality in Tawi-Tawi. On March 19, 2021, Lt. Col. Venjie P. Pendon PN(M), Commanding Officer, MBLT-6 confirmed the information with assistance from the Indonesian counterparts that the rescued individuals were indeed the Indonesian kidnap victims.

A custodial debriefing followed and revealed the following information: That on March 17, 2021, a motorized indigenous watercraft locally known as "katigan" from Sulu capsized when it was hit by huge waves in the waters off Kalupag Island, Languyan, Tawi-Tawi. Passengers onboard the said watercraft drifted ashore and were eventually separated into two groups utilizing the broken boat wing as a floating device. On March 18, 2021, the three (3) Indonesian kidnap victims and ASG-SL SUHUD SALISIM @ BEN WAGAS were rescued in the waters off Pasigan Island, Tandubas, Tawi-Tawi by local fishermen and personnel of Tandubas Municipal Police Station (MPS) while ASG-SL INJIMAR MANGKABONG @ BESAL JAKARE was also rescued by a passing motorboat (lantsa) M/V KASSANDRA in the waters off Silandat Island, South Ubian, Tawi-Tawi and was later turned over to South Ubian MPS. A Command Group was immediately organized by MBLT-6 to directly facilitate the safe transfer of the rescued Indonesian kidnap victims and the apprehended ASG members from Tandubas and South Ubian Municipalities. On March 19, 2021, they were received by Col. Nestor E. Narag Jr. PN(M)(GSC), Deputy Commander, 2nd Marine Brigade, and safely turned over to the Commander, Western

Mindanao Command at Headquarters, 2nd Marine Brigade in Bongao, Tawi-Tawi.

Meanwhile, the remaining passengers of the capsized watercraft that included the group of ASG subleader Apo Mike, ASG members Long MAKBI @ LONG, and Darus ROGER @ DARUS, together with Indonesian kidnap victim Khairuldin, were rescued by passing fishermen between the waters off Kalupag Island, Languyan and Tandungan Island, Tandubas in Tawi-Tawi. This raw information obtained by MBLT-6 intelligence operatives was translated into actionable intelligence on the possible location of Apo Mike and the remaining Indonesian kidnap victim and prompted the launching of Focus Military Operation/Search and Rescue Operation.

### Turning the Tides

An act of God, the capsizing of the ASG's watercraft paved way for the AFP to neutralize the enemy and defeat their greatest and most potent strength, the mastery of the terrain. The MBLT-6 used ASG's strength and tactics against them and launched an "asymmetric war" against the enemy using the same strategy.

Immediate surveillance, casing operations, and mobilization of several action agents on Kapulag Island were launched to pinpoint the personalities. With the playing field leveled and right action agents composed of larger ground operating troops under MBLT-6 Command Group (SOP 12, MBLT-12, 61st FRC, 2MBDE Intel Teams) and the 2MBDE Special Intelligence Operation, the security forces acted swiftly to neutralize the group of Apo Mike. The rest is history.

In an unfamiliar area, the ASG members sought refuge with the local populace and forced to hide and evade the operating forces. Their strength was turned against them,

as these became Marine HUMINT, and IMINT Operative's targets and points of infiltration and exploitation. Multiple deception maneuver schemes in the ridgeline and peak of Bud Kapulag up to its vast coastal mangrove areas were conducted. Philippine Navy's Multi-Purpose Assault Crafts were deployed to conduct intensified Maritime Interdiction Operations (MIO) at the vicinity of Kapuyag Island to ensure that no civilian watercraft can go in and out of the vicinity of the area.

### Red Storm Rising

On March 20, 2021, the first encounter with the ASG resulted in the apprehension of Apo Mike, who later died due to critical wounds. The following day on March 21, 2021, the second encounter resulted in the successful rescue of the Indonesian kidnap victim Khairuldin Bin Yai Kii, who was immediately transported for medical check-up onboard a Multi-Purpose Assault Craft. After conducting another detailed planning and intelligence fusion to finish the mission, the final encounter with the ASG on March 23, 2021 resulted in the neutralization of two (2) ASG members Long and Darus and capture of one (1) cal. 5.56 M16 rifle with one (1) short magazine laded with twenty (20) rounds of ammunition.

This marks the end of the saga of the dreaded Indanan-based ASG subleader Apo Mike. The successful operation was a product of the rapid response planning process with immediate intelligence build-up involving the Fleet-Marine Teams under the direction of BGen. Arturo G. Rojas PN(M), Commander, 2nd Marine Brigade.





# DISMANTLING THE COMMUNIST TERRORIST GROUP (CTG) IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF A FEMALE MARINES

If people think that eliminating insurgency and dismantling the CTG is through bloody wars alone, then it is high time that we must change this kind of mindset.

For more than five decades, the communist group is able to propagate and establish committees in the rural barangays where basic services are hardly reached and the presence of the government is absent. They have existed and survived the test of time and exploited the hearts and minds of the people who have been indoctrinated that the government is only for the few. They presented themselves as the real government that would bring change and progress.

Focus Military Operations are indeed very important in hunting down members of the communist group. However, it is also with equal importance that the life support system of the terrorist, which is the sympathy and support from the people, be cut and their infiltration into the communities be stopped. As the Marines are operating in the mountains to pursue the communist members, civil-military operations complemented with the delivery of services by the local government agencies should also be conducted to counter the propaganda of the CTGs, preempt their activities, denounce their presence in society, and win back the support and trust of the people to their government and the military.

Female Marines may opt not to be in the assault or raid operations but through their efforts in reaching out to the communities staying, sleeping, eating, and living with them, they also contribute to peacefully dismantling CTG. Female warriors are instrumental in winning the sympathy and trust of the people especially the elderly and children. Through constant engagement with the communities, they enlighten the people of the deceptions and true intent of the insurgents and by this, they show the people who their real allies are in community development. Applying the whole-of-nation approach of the Executive Order #70 is also an effective and important mechanism for the successful elimination of insurgency in the communities. The effort of the inter-agencies working together for the people has restored the support and sympathy of the society that was once exploited by the deceptive CTG. Dismantling the CTG does not only stop when their members are killed. It should always be sustained by earning the trust and building a good rapport with the masses who are vulnerable and easily exploited by these groups.

“Insurgency must be isolated from the populace, their cause, and support. While it may be required to kill or capture insurgents, it is more effective in the long run to separate an insurgency from the population and its resources, thus letting it die.” - *US publication, “Counterinsurgency”*

*2Lt. Ruby Jean C. Cabang PNIM, Platoon Commander  
4<sup>th</sup> Marine Company, Marine Battalion Landing Team-4*





# APPRECIATED BY THE GENERAL PUBLIC AND CO-WORKERS IN THE AFP

"WE COMPLEMENT WITH THEM  
AND NOT COMPETE AGAINST  
THEM IN THE PERFORMANCE OF OUR  
MISSIONS. THEIR SUCCESS IS OUR SUCCESS."





# "BAYANIHAN IN PALAUI ISLAND"

By: Marine Battalion Landing Team-10

(Photo by: Fernando jr. Lopez)

*Palaui Island is one of the best island destinations in the country. It is a natural marine reserve since 1994 with a land area of 8,048 hectares. The island has 840 population in 200 households and 32 of which belongs to Indigenous People, Agta. The island of Palaui is part of Barangay San Vicente in Sta Ana, Cagayan. It sits off the northeastern tip of the island of Luzon. Not a lot of land is available for farming because most of the island is declared as protected area and the residents are primarily into fishing as their primary source of food and income. Because of the island's isolation, rich natural resources and the presence of a resource-dependent population, Palaui faces both livelihood and resource protection issues. Fish and other Marine resource are abundant in the island, however, during the rainy and typhoon seasons, most of the residents rely on alternative source of food such as root crops and small-scale vegetable farming.*

On March 06, 2021, the Naval Task Group Fleet Marine Cagayan/Marine Battalion Landing Team -10 spearheaded the "Bayanihan in Palaui Island" together with its various stakeholders. It was made possible through the efforts of the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office, Municipal Agriculture Office, Rural Health Unit, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, and other different local government agencies of Sta Ana, Cagayan. Among the main contributors were civilian volunteers from Go Share Foundation, Waves for Water, National Bookstore, Palaui Environmental Protectors Association, and other non-government organizations that lent their hands in the success of this mission.

The conduct of the "Bayanihan in Palaui Island" was able to deliver basic services for the people including free health consultation, which benefitted a total of 500 individuals, 172 had free medical consultation and medication, 51 treated for dental problems, 31 children got free circumcision, 81 had free haircut. Various items were also distributed: relief goods to 200 families; books and school supplies to Palaui Elementary School and Pag-Asaca Elementary from National Bookstore Foundation; fishing gears, life vests, fish nets and hooks to a total of 50 fisher folks in the island; planted fifty (50) fruit bearing trees in the vicinity of Palaui Elementary School. Other activities included parlor games, film showing, feeding program to children, and health and nutrition education to lactating mothers with regard to child-rearing and home sanitation. Moreover, the senior citizen sector received cash assistance and social pension from the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office.

Overall, the residents of Palaui Island were able to experience and witness the support given by the government and the generosity of the private sector. The activities made the residents feel the presence and services of the government as well as gain the trust and confidence in the Marines. The successful mission of this unit was attained through teamwork with various stakeholders.

## TRIVIA:

*Cape Engaño Lighthouse, also known as Faro de Cabo Engaño, is a historic lighthouse on Palaui Island and situated atop the summit of a hill 92 meters above sea level. Built from 1888 to 1892 during the Spanish Colonial Period, the lighthouse served as gateway for incoming ships.*





# ENSURING PEACEFUL VOTING IN THE PALAWAN DIVISION PLEBISCITE 2021

In 2019, Congress enacted Republic Act No. 11259, An Act Diving the Province of Palawan into three provinces, namely: Palawan del Norte, Palawan Oriental, and Palawan del Sur. However, before the ratification of the aforementioned Act, a plebiscite was originally scheduled on the second Monday of May 2020, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was rescheduled on the 13th of March 2021. Palawan is considered one of the most beautiful islands in the world and for decades the Philippine Marine Corps has been the representative of the AFP in securing its land, shorelines, tourist spots, and people. Relative to this, the Marines of the 3rd Marine Brigade, together with COMELEC and other agencies, were tasked with ensuring the security of all polling centers for the plebiscite. MBLT-4 took charge of the southern part of the province, while MBLT-3 secured the northern municipalities.

As a background, the Palawan Provincial Board unanimously passed a resolution to divide the province into three. This gave way for the passage of RA 11259 that called for the province-wide plebiscite. Proponents argued that it will lead to more tourism opportunities, speed up the delivery of social services to the residents of the island,

and create job opportunities. These were the arguments of the “3 in 1 Palawan movement” favoring the “YES” vote. The other group, which is called the “One Palawan movement” and in favor of the “NO” vote, argued that the division of Palawan is not the appropriate answer to the weak governance, corruption, and natural resource use issues. They also added that the costs entailed in creating provinces, as well as holding a plebiscite, will be shouldered by taxpayer’s money and that this is unnecessary because the Palaweños did not ask for the division in the first place.

To ensure that the plebiscite is conducted peacefully, the Marines deployed more than 400 to augment the 1,500 security personnel from the Palawan Police Provincial Office. The Marines also formed a Quick Response Team that stood ready to respond to any untoward incident.

Overall, the mission was an overwhelming success as the plebiscite was generally orderly and peaceful with no untoward incident. Voting results were likewise conclusive with 172,304 voted “NO” against the 122,223 who voted “YES” in favor of the division.



*2Lt. Jaafar T. Omar PN(M), 2<sup>nd</sup> Platoon Commander,  
24<sup>th</sup> Marine Company, Marine Battalion Landing Team-4*



# MBLT TRES SERVES AS WARDEN OF PLEBISCITE IN NORTHERN PALAWAN

By: Cpt. Dennis D. Sadlay PN(M)

After Congress passed a law, Republic Act 11259 (2019), dividing the Province of Palawan into three provinces, a plebiscite was conducted on March 13, 2021 so the people can vote whether they accept or reject the move to split the province into three.

Being deputized by the COMELEC, the Joint Task Force Peacock (JTFP), in line with the Commander, WESCOM, took the lead in planning, coordinating, and supervising the tasks and functions of all AFP units in Palawan to fully support the COMELEC and PNP in ensuring the peaceful conduct of the plebiscite on March 13, 2021. MBLT-3/Joint Task Group North was tasked to oversee the areas covering Northern Palawan, comprising the projected provinces of Palawan Oriental and Palawan del Norte. The areas covered included 14 municipalities, 230 barangays, 1,608 established precincts, 1,481 total clustered precincts, 244,247 registered voters, and 281 total voting centers.

When COMELEC declared the Gun Ban from February 11 to March 20, 2021, MBLT-3 deployed its forces for plebiscite duties in coordination with the Municipal Election Officer and the Chief of Police of the respective municipalities in Northern Palawan. Intensified checkpoints were established to impose the Gun Ban until it was lifted.

Moreso, MBLT-3, together with the PNP, deployed forces in the strategic polling centers to ensure the safe, fair, secured and successful conduct of the plebiscite.

It was demonstrated that with keen dedication, selfless service, diligence, professionalism, and synergy of efforts of MBLT-3, together with PNP and other agencies, the plebiscite was successfully conducted without any untoward incident. The Board of Election Inspectors (BEIs), ballot boxes, and election paraphernalia were successfully secured.

Despite inclement weather that hampered the delivery and recovery of plebiscite paraphernalia especially in far-flung and island barangays, this Unit thoroughly and methodically oversaw the delivery and recovery of plebiscite paraphernalia from the different mainland and island polling centers in Northern Palawan to the Provincial COMELEC Office in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan where ballot boxes and paraphernalia were consolidated for a final tally of votes. Possible plans and activities of the CTGs or lawless elements were deterred due to this Unit's firm security, close monitoring, and collaborative efforts with PNP during the duration of the Palawan Plebiscite 2021.



# PANDEMIC HAS TAUGHT ME ABOUT LIFE

By: Maj. Elmer E. Basas CHS(PN)

We are living in unprecedented times. Since last year, our lives have been met with great challenges. No one could have predicted there would be a worldwide pandemic that would cripple countries economically and kill hundreds of thousands of people.

No one would have imagined the impact it would have on business and industries across the globe. Companies have laid off employees and some have closed their doors. Families have endured the loss of loved ones and financial upheaval. Several sports are playing with no fans in a bubble. New terms were introduced to our lexicon like, Community Quarantine, Flatten the Curve, and Social Distancing that have kept people isolated from one another. We are living in a different world.

This pandemic has changed the way we do life. It has brought things into proper perspective and has shown us what is important in life. During my time of quarantine and social distancing, I had a lot of time to reflect on the past, work on the present, and plan for tomorrow. I am determined to make the necessary changes to live a better life now and after the pandemic.

If you are ready to make the necessary changes to live a better life in the pandemic and afterwards then these 5 truths might help you:

## 1. LIFE IS SHORT

No one is going to live forever. It is the truth. But, for some reason many of us act as if we will live forever. One thing the pandemic has emphasized is that life can be fragile and unpredictable. Life is too short to live haphazardly. Do not waste time waiting for the elusive day when you have enough money, the right support system, and the perfect timing to live out your dreams.

## 2. FAILURE HAPPENS

Do not let the fear of failure keep you from going after your dreams. Do not let the fear of failure hold you hostage. Even the best leaders in the world failed. Failing is a part of life. When failure happens, identify the root cause, deal with it, and move on.

## 3. TAKE ACTION TODAY

Focus on what you can do today. Do not worry about what you should have done yesterday or what you need to do tomorrow. Take action today. If you focus too long on what happened in the past or what you need to do in the future, you miss living today.

## 4. SEPARATE FROM NEGATIVE PEOPLE

Some people want a balcony view of your life. They complain and gripe about everything and appreciate nothing. They will drain your energy and deplete your enthusiasm if you allow them in proximity of your life. Life is too short to spend it with people who live in a perpetual state of negativity. It is difficult to think forward when you are surrounded by negativity. Seek out positive people who can encourage and help keep you balanced. Decide today that you will not allow negative people to determine how you think, feel, and act.

## 5. ACCEPT CHANGE

Change is a way of life. It can be unexpected and sudden or it can be welcomed and planned. Life is a never-ending series of changes. We must learn to embrace and adapt to the ups and downs that come with change. You can either resist it and potentially get run over by it, or you can choose to cooperate with it, adapt it, and learn how to benefit from it. When you embrace change, you will begin to see it as an opportunity for growth.





# RELEVANT AND RESPONSIVE TO THE DEFENSE AND SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

"CHANGE IS NEEDED  
TO ASSURE RELEVANCE  
AND RESPONSIVENESS. WHO  
WE ARE, WHAT WE DO IS HOW  
WE FIGHT. WE ARE MARINES,  
THE NATION'S FORCE OF CHOICE."





# 25<sup>TH</sup> MC: UNITED WE STAND

By: 25MC, Marine Battalion Landing Team-5

The 25th Marine Company, under the leadership of Cpt. Shajeed P. Andik PN(M) stationed at Sitio Sarmiento, Brgy. Langkong, Matanog, Maguindanao, has gained significant accomplishments since the 25MC arrived in its new area of operation in the Municipalities of Matanog and Barira in Maguindanao.

In January 2021, this unit conducted various **Civil-Military Operations** (CMO) including peacebuilding efforts, free mobile haircut operations, tree planting, clean-up drives, Brigada Eskwela, and other initiatives that were made possible in coordination with LGUs and non-government organizations.

This unit is also involved in rido settlements. One particular case was the rido settlement involving the Mamabayao family of Brgy. Bugasan Norte and Mariga family of Bayanga Sur that started in 2019. On January 10, 2021, the Municipal Advisory Council for Reconciliation (MACRU) of Matanog, in collaboration with the local police and this unit, initiated the settlement. The local governments of Matanog and Barira highly appreciated the continuous effort of this unit in facilitating the immediate resolution of existing rido cases in the area, and thus, promoting peace and harmony with the community within its AO.

In terms of **Combat and Security Operations**, this unit continuously conducts combat (foot and mobile) patrols, random day and night checkpoint operations, and support to law enforcement operations, which resulted in numerous apprehensions of illegal firearms. In total, the unit contributed to the Battalion effort with the total apprehension of thirty-one (31) assorted firearms, fifty-two (52) different types of magazines, six hundred eight (608) different types of ammunition, and three (3) fragmentary grenade. On February 19, 2021, operating elements of Marine Battalion Landing Team-5 under the leadership of Lt. Col. Tino P. Maslan PN(M)(GSC) conducted Support to Law Enforcement Operations to elements of PRO-BAR during the serving of warrant of arrest to "RAGUNDO GROUP" (DI-Listed) led by a certain POROK MARANDAKAN RAGUNDO aka ROKKIE at Sitio Kigan, Brgy. Liong, Barira, Maguindanao. The support role of 25MC was crucial in executing the operation, which resulted in the recovery of two (2) Cal. .45 Armscor, two (2) magazines, and apprehension of five (5) personalities who were subjected for identification.

On January 01, 2021, the 25MC deployed personnel and established an additional Marine Detachment at Brgy. Kidama in Matanog, Maguindanao to addresses the call of

residents asking for help in resolving security concerns and protecting them from lawless groups. This was accomplished in coordination with the Chairman of Brgy. Kidama and ABC President Hon. Jamel W. Langalac and Hon. Mayor Mohammad-Ali S. Guro of Matanog, Maguindanao.

On Intelligence Operations, the activities of Maguindanao-based local terrorist groups (LTGs), namely, BIFF, DI Hassan group, and DI Turaifie group have been consistently monitored outside the area of operation. These LTGs target military troops as well as Christian-dominated areas in Central Mindanao as part of their determination to retaliate against intensified government operations

in Mindanao. This unit conducts troop information and education to inform the troops of the importance of strengthening intelligence monitoring and initiating preventive measures to avoid any planned atrocities. Also, various security measures are being conducted continuously including combat and mobile patrols, checkpoint operations, and maintaining of local networks.

All these efforts of the 25MC are in line with the mission of securing the people and communities and advancing peace in Matanog and Barira. This unit remains committed to consolidating local support and increasing the people's trust and confidence in the government.



## **MBLT-9 CONDUCTS EMERGENCY RESPONSE TRAINING IN PREPARATION FOR MARU OPERATION**

By: Marine Battalion Landing Team-9

In preparation for its activation as the Marine Amphibious Ready Force Unit (MARU), the 9th Marine Battalion joined the Emergency Response Training (ERT) in October 2020 at Marine Base Gregorio Lim, Ternate, Cavite.

With technical assistance from Rescue Recon Philippines, the training included standard first aid, mass casualty incident, incident management system, collapsed structure (search and rescue), high angle (search and

rescue), water safety, basic life support, lifting and moving of patient, terrorism response, and disaster, respiratory emergencies and cardiovascular emergencies.

The 9th Marine Battalion saw this as a good opportunity to increase its emergency response capability. As the unit has been activated as the specialized MARU, it is now more prepared to respond to any natural calamity or man-made incidents.

# MBLT-12: SAFEGUARDING THE PEOPLE AND THE BORDERS - FROM PALAWAN TO TAWI-TAWI

By: 2Lt. Bernard P. Villacampa PN(M)

**Birth of MBLT-12:** Marine Battalion Landing Team-12 was activated on April 14, 2010 with Col. Raul Jesus L. Caldez PN(M)(GSC) as the first Commanding Officer. Like any other MBLTs, the unit has undergone training and refurbishment before its deployment at the Western Command Area of Operations (AO). In its eleven (11) years of existence, it has been led by ten (10) Commanding Officers, and since its activation in its previous AO in Palawan to its current AO in Tawi-Tawi, MBLT-12, has garnered various accomplishments in the performance of its mission.

During its stint in Palawan, MBLT-12, aside from its role in safeguarding the Kalayaan Group of Islands (KIG) and its populace, received its first baptism of fire on February 03, 2011, against CPP/NPA aggressors at Sitio Sinuriban, Brgy. Pinaglabanan, Quezon, Palawan while conducting combat patrols.

**Retraining:** On July 09, 2019, MBLT-12 left Palawan for retraining and refurbishment at Marine Barracks Rudiardo Brown, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City. While on retraining, MBLT-12 successfully participated in various exercises and trainings such as: DAGIT-PA, PAGSISIKAP, and KAMANDAG, and battalion field training exercises at Marine Base Gregorio Lim, Ternate, Cavite. They have also sent personnel for skills refresher courses. Some participated in the Marine Scout Sniper Course and even for cross-training at Scout Ranger Training School, Philippine Army. This training further enhanced the skills of its officers and enlisted personnel.

**Middle East Conflict:** On January 11, 2020, MBLT-12 was again directed to send out a platoon as a contingent for a foreign/overseas mission for the repatriation of Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) from different countries in the Middle East. Onboard Philippine Navy Ship LD 602 (BRP Davao Del Sur), MBLT-12 personnel served as security for one hundred fifty-four (154) days in the successful repatriation of forty-seven (47) OFWs.

**Taal Volcano Eruption:** When Taal volcano erupted from January 16 to 30, 2020, MBLT-12 was again called for humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations to the affected areas of the volcano eruption. With limited resources, MBLT-12 personnel braved the harsh condition of ashfall, all while extending help to the victims by delivering water and food supplies.

**COVID-19 Pandemic:** On March 15, 2020, when the deadly virus COVID-19 hit the Philippines, MBLT-12 was the first unit to be deployed as front liners. Unmindful of their health and safety, MBLT-12 front-liners manned checkpoints, safeguarded quarantine facilities, and imposed health protocols 24/7 within Metro Manila to stop the spread of the deadly virus.

**New Home:** On June 03, 2020, MBLT-12, after completing its retraining and refurbishing, was finally declared on operational status and was sent off to the province of

Tawi-Tawi as its new AO with its Battalion Headquarters at Brgy. Nalil, Bongao, Tawi-Tawi. Under its jurisdiction are the municipalities of Bongao, Panglima Sugala, Simunul, Sitangkai, and Sibutu. The unit is presently under the leadership of Lt. Col. Aladdin G. Caluza PN(M), the 11th Commanding Officer.

**Sustaining the peace and safeguarding the people in the new AO:** MBLT-12 plays a big role in sustaining the peace and supporting the development efforts in its new AO. From March 19 to 24, 2021, the skills and knowledge acquired during the retraining were put to the test when SOP 12 and S2 personnel of the unit supported the Operations "GALUGAD" of 2MBDE. The operation was conducted with MBLT-6, Boat Attack Division and other Law Enforcement Agencies. Overall, it resulted in the successful rescue of one (1) Indonesian kidnap victim and the neutralization of three (3) ASG abductors on Kalupag Island, Tawi-Tawi. This showcased the strong partnership and jointness in law enforcement operations.

Furthermore, with its firsthand experience as front liners in Metro Manila, MBLT-12, supported the effort of the IATF Tawi-Tawi by manning checkpoints to regulate the movement of the people during Enhanced Community Quarantine in the province and by conducting loud-speaker operations to direct the people to observe health protocols and curfew hours. These efforts were able to help the IATF isolate, contain, minimize, and effectively manage the spread of the deadly virus, stopping it from further escalating. As a result, Tawi-Tawi province is listed with the least COVID-19 cases in the entire country.

Aside from its COVID-19 efforts, MBLT-12 also conducts community programs. In partnership with the LGUs and NGOs, the unit aims to extend basic services to the less fortunate areas of the AO. These include food feeding, giving of food packs and hygiene kits, medical missions, and school building constructions and development. Knowing the importance of education, MBLT-12 also acts as a teacher through its Camp Base Literacy Program. Currently, the unit teaches thirty-six (36) less fortunate children in the farthest island of Sitangkai, Tawi-Tawi. The program aims to promote the importance of education with reading, writing, counting, and speaking exercises to prepare them for formal education. Aligned with this effort, MBLT-12, in partnership with Jade Learning School Foundation Inc., is building a semi-concrete school for the Badjao Community in Panguhan Island, Sitangkai, Tawi-Tawi, the farthest known island in the southwestern part of the country. It aims to provide a space to teach the residing Badjao tribe the basics of how to read, write, count, and speak in our national language.

From its previous AOR in Palawan to its new home in Tawi-Tawi, MBLT-12 has untiringly given its best effort to safeguard the people and the borders. By turning fear to confidence, doubts to trust, and contempt to respect, our Marines in the AO can achieve an environment conducive to peace and development.



**TRAINING**

**TRAINING**

**TRAINING**

"WE WILL CONTINUE TO  
ENHANCE OUR TRAINING  
PROGRAMS TO EQUIP US WITH  
TIMELY AND NECESSARY  
KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS."





# LGU-OMAR, MBLT-8 SPEARHEAD YOUTH CAMP: LEADERSHIP TRAINING

By: Cpt. Maria Rowena B. Dalmacio PN(M)

Youth have always been regarded as our nation's future. Few decades from now, this young generation will be our country's resource managers, lawmakers, and economic and social developers. This thinking became the inspiration of the Marine Battalion Landing Team-8 and local government unit of Omar to conceptualize activities that will involve our youth aside from the usual sports activities. The concept sprouted from the usual dialogue with stakeholders, which evolved to a youth program that opened new learning opportunities for the 35 youth leaders of Omar Municipality.

Realizing the significance of training our youth and developing them to contribute to nation-building, the Omar Municipality, in partnership with the Marine Battalion Landing Team-8 and Ministry of Social Service Development, spearheaded the 2-day Youth Camp Leadership Training on 06-07 April 2021 at the Omar Municipal Compound, Brgy. Lahing-Lahing, Omar, Sulu with the theme, "Strengthening youth participation in socio-civic services".

Thirty-five youth leaders from the eight barangays of Omar joined the 2-day activity. The participants were composed of SK Chairmen, Treasurers, Secretaries, Councilors, and three student leaders from Capual National High School. The activity aimed to encourage Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) members of Omar to be active and perform their tasks as representatives of youth, provide Leadership and Basic Survival Skills training to SK Members, and provide an avenue to apply their leadership and basic survival skills during the Youth Camp activities.

"The youth camp intends to 'Train the trainers'. The participants will then replicate the leadership activities to their respective barangays and will be participated by their SK councils and members. This will develop further their leadership skills as they perform their functions and their role in nation-building," the Commanding Officer of Marine Battalion Landing Team-8, Lt. Col. Abdulmoel A. Alamia PN(M) said.

The youth participants were brought to Bud Parangan for various activities to build their confidence as leaders. These were facilitated by the Ministry of Social Service Development (MSSD). The Marines also taught some jungle survival techniques such as knot tying, producing fire from bamboo, and cooking rice and chicken through the use of materials available in the jungle.

PLT. Pepito Oreta PNP, Chief of Police of Omar Municipal Police Station conducted a lecture on anti-illegal drug campaign, while the Acting CMO Officer of MBLT-8, Cpt. Maria Rowena B. Dalmacio PN(M), showed a documentary film about "Child Soldier" and lectured on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism. Sangguniang Kabataan functions were discussed by Ms. Catherine Abdullajid, Local Youth Development Officer of Omar, and the Leadership and Project Development were discussed by Ms. Nhurilyn Senibalo from the MSSD. In a bonfire session, the religious organization, United Duat for Peace and Development, shared the importance of Islam on leadership and youth development.

"This youth camp is an avenue to protect our youth sector from the influence of illegal drugs and terrorism as they are the most vulnerable sector of the society and develop their potentials as leaders as they will be the future leaders of Omar, Sulu," said Col. Hernanie S. Songano PN(M)(GSC), the Commander of 4th Marine Brigade as he delivered his message to the youth participants during its closing ceremony.

As an output of the 2-day event, the Sangguniang Kabataan organization presented their socio-civic activities, which were implemented during Ramadan and other youth activities as their way forward.

This simple activity once again proved that every agency has its little share in forging our future leaders. Our future relies on them so we must save them from influences that will take away their dreams.

# A GLIMPSE OF MBLT-11 CMO SUCCESS STORY: TRAINING FOR ADDITIONAL EARNING

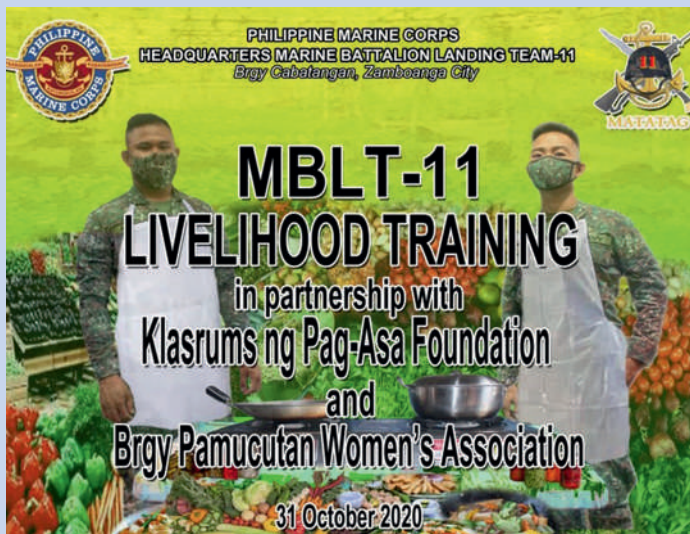
By: 2Lt. Sylanie De Guzman PN(M)

*It started with a vision to help the community adapt to the COVID-19 infected economy and then followed by intricate planning with stakeholders and Barangay Local Government Units (BLGUs) so as not to violate IATF health protocols implemented in the City.*

October 31, 2020 - Aling Pilar was one of those who attended the Marine Battalion Landing Team-11 Livelihood Training at Brgy. Pamucutan, Zamboanga City. It was a one-day activity, together with the volunteers of Klasrums Ng Pag-Asa, designed to demonstrate various baking, pickling, and other food processing styles that will allow the attendees to creatively make use of available raw materials around their area. Attendees were also given a chance to “demo-back” for the instructors to assess if they have fully digested the basics of the aforementioned styles.



During the demonstration teaching of Klasrums Ng Pag-Asa volunteers to the attendees of the livelihood training



Finished products of the livelihood training





Blessed with 3 children, Pilar Ituralde Vilaber, forty-four years old Zamboangueña, is also known in her barangay as she is designated as the new President of Brgy. Pamucutan Women's Organization. For so long, the barangay has been scouting for an enthusiastic and eager individual who can lead the Pamucutan's women towards developing technical skills and contributing to the overall economy and upkeep of the said barangay. Thus, in her dedication to lead and be a role model to other women especially in this phase of the battle against the COVID-19 crisis, she has been looking for ways and means to bridge unemployment gaps to the new normal livelihood programs that can alleviate their difficulty.

*“Nabuhayan ako ng loob at natuwa ako noong binalita sa akin na may plano ang mga Marines at Klasrooms Ng Pag-asa na magturo sa amin,” Aling Pilar shared when asked how the livelihood activity helped her and the barangay. “Natutuwa nga po ako dahil sa mga nag-attend ng training, halos lahat kami ay patuloy na ina-apply ang aming natutunan hindi lang sa aming bahay pero pati na rin sa business. Sa katunayan nga po, nagkaroon po ako ng lakas ng loob na magsimula ng online kakanin at iba pa gamit ang aking Facebook account,” she continued as she narrated what she has learned from the livelihood activity.*

Since November 2020, Aling Pilar has started her venture in the world of small capital business using donated utensils during the livelihood training. She is joined by the members of the barangay organization fully supported by their Brgy. Chairman, Hon. Roberto Carpio. Aside from making different kakanin products, Aling Pilar has also seen the beauty of mushroom farming that she also sells online.



From a famous proverb, **GIVE A MAN A FISH AND YOU FEED HIM FOR A DAY; TEACH A MAN TO FISH AND YOU FEED HIM FOR A LIFETIME**, teaching and training certainly provide an indelible mark that stimulates the creativity, resourcefulness, and flexibility of an individual to explore options that will uplift his/her situation.

“We do CMO activities not primarily to 'one time-big time' provide something to the community. We do CMO out of the concept of teaching **INDEPENDENCY** through the interplay of training, coaching, and supervising. With this, I firmly believe that we just don't win the hearts and minds of the people of Zamboanga for a day but surely for a lifetime. Moreover, winning hearts and minds by **PROVIDING** is effective but winning hearts and minds by **EMPOWERING**, it's another level of CMO,” said Lt. Col. Joel O. Atienza PN(M), Commanding Officer, MBLT-11.

Despite the threat of COVID-19, Team Matatag is relentless in planning and providing various new normal CMO activities that will aid in the sustainment of human and economic development of Zamboanga City.





# WARRIOR ABOVE HELIBORNE OPERATION TRAINING FOR THE MARINES

By: Marine Battalion Landing Team-9



Developing military tactics, enhancing combat capabilities, and building operational abilities are just some of the goals of military training. These were among the principles taught to the men of the 49th Marine Company of the 9th Marine Battalion during their Heliborne Operation training held last year at the Marine Base, Ternate, Cavite.

The Heliborne Operation training provided Marine troops with the requisite knowledge of the helicopter's flexibility and specific capabilities on why it was the best choice for a vertical envelopment mission. Ground forces tactical mobility is also improved by the use of aircraft as it allows fighting units to enter enemy territory deep within to conduct offensive operations. The skills acquired may also be utilized during disaster rescue operations.

Advancing the combat skills and techniques of our Marine frontliners creates an opportunity for the Philippine Marine to not only be capable of fighting on the ground but also above through the use of air vehicles.

The Heliborne Operation training enables our Marine troops to learn new knowledge and skills in fighting hostile forces while also assisting in the maintenance of peace in areas where they are most needed.

The soldier that once was taught to fight on the ground now paves his way to move forward and learn new skills to secure the land. These men are now prepared to face another battle that will come their way as they are now standing proudly equipped with the skills necessary for them to thrive both on land and air.

# 49<sup>TH</sup> MC: 1<sup>ST</sup> HELIBORNE OPERATIONS

By: Marine Battalion Landing Team-9



The 9th Marine Battalion was tasked to conduct retraining and refurbishing for six (6) months. After the successful retraining and refurbishing, the 9th Marine Battalion was declared as the first Marine Amphibious Ready Unit (MARU) to accomplish the commandant's initial planning guidance and address the mission of the Philippine Navy and Joint Forces for the archipelagic defense – that is, to perform the assigned missions and essential tasks with MARU as a national maneuver force for coastal defense, special operation, and humanitarian assistance and disaster response (HADR).

Heliborne Operation training was assigned to 49th Marine Company as maneuvering force of the MARU. This tactical operation requires maneuvers on the battlefield utilizing helicopters or appropriate air assets to easily engage and destroy enemy forces only accessible through vertical insertion. In fact, in offensive combat operations, it provides greater mobility for rapid troops movement, logistic support, and exploitation of supporting fires.

During heliborne operation, enemy forces are prevented because of its immediate backup. This operation

is also known to be the fastest way of carrying all necessary combat supplies, equipment, and men. In times of crisis or calamities especially in isolated areas, heliborne operation can provide swift assistance to people who are in danger and requiring rescue or relief.

It is a great honor to be part of 49MC 1st Heliborne Operation and part of the 1st MARU because of our strengthened capability to provide more combat and non-combat support in any clime and place.



## GEARING UP FOR SMALL BOAT OPERATIONS

During a pandemic when safety protocols and social distancing are still in effect, we in the 29th Marine Company of the 9th Marine Battalion Marine Amphibious Ready Unit (MARU) continue to undergo physical conditioning to build up our strength, keep our resistance, and maintain a healthy mind and body for the days ahead. Receiving training from the Force Reconnaissance Group (FRG), one of the elite group forces of the Philippine Marine Corps, was a privilege as we geared up to be the first-ever MARU.

The 29th Marine Company is commissioned as an expert in small boat operations wherein military and naval warfare refers to an operation in and around the nearshore part of the sea, within a certain distance of shore, and carried out by small but fast and highly maneuverable watercraft. It is an operation that will assist in the implementation of successful future operations of the MARU. We were deeply overwhelmed. It is worth noting that all of us went through various training water exercises, with competencies in various swim styles such as lapping, sidestroke, and freestyle. It was competitive in a way that our company was

split into four groups, which pitted against swimming and rubber boat paddling competitions as part of the training. I was lucky enough to be recognized as one of the few Scout Swimmers. In our last training, the small boat operation raid proved to be a daunting task as elements were against us. We had to apply all the knowledge and skills we gained during the training.

Through perseverance coupled with our sense of brotherhood, the 29th Marine Company was able to hurdle everything. No amount of test or situation can deter us from finishing the training, making ourselves equipped and ready for the battle ahead in the real world.



*PFC. Jolly T. Mateo Jr. PN(M), Rifleman, 29<sup>th</sup> Marine Company  
Marine Amphibious Ready Unit*



# HURDLING UNCERTAINTIES IN MARU TRAINING

By: 2Lt. Chester M. Obtiar PN(M)



*Embrace uncertainty. Some of the most beautiful chapters in our lives won't have a title until much later. – Bob Goff*

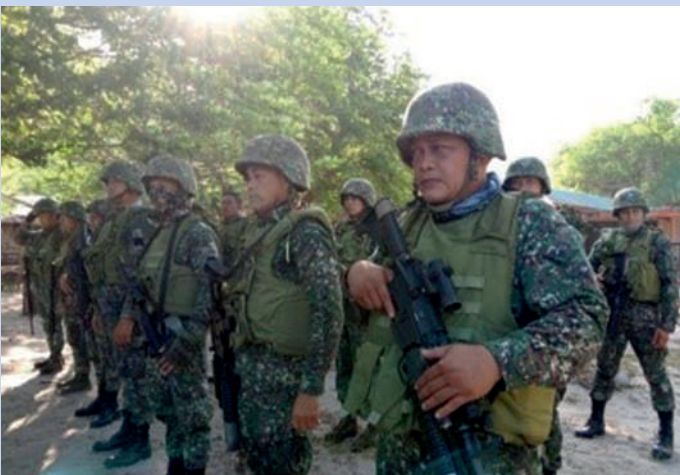
This quote best describes the status of the 9th Marine Battalion's retraining phase. On July 16, 2020, the retraining phase of the unit started with a rigorous push to be the national maneuver force of the Philippine Navy – the PMC Marine Amphibious Ready Unit. The battalion then divided its company into three (3) different specializations namely: 29MC to Assault Boat Company, 39MC to Mechanized Company, and 49MC to Heliborne Company to undergo different training that suits the sets of skills and capabilities necessary in becoming mission-capable.

The retraining went smoothly in the first few months but due to the unavailability of Naval assets, training priorities changed. There were uncertainties beyond our control, but with the unit's drive to help fulfill the Marine Corps' vision, the 9th Marine Battalion made adjustments to the training with the available assets on hand.

*When nothing is sure, everything is possible. – Margaret Drabble*

We were faced with many possibilities and different paths. The constant planning and preparation helped the unit complete the training to fit the skill set of each company despite changes in the retraining schedules. We can never argue that this pandemic changed our approach to handling things. We were involved in many exercises together with reservists and other AFP units, which greatly boosted our operational capabilities and enhanced our cooperation. The Mechanized Company and Assault Boat Company were the ones that greatly benefited in this retraining phase as they were able to display their capabilities during exercises. The Heliborne Company had challenges in terms of air assets but they were able to hurdle and complete the training.

While we are privileged to have completed our trainings and learned new skills from them, we look forward to the near future when all the necessary assets become available to maximize our unit's potential. I end this with a quote from inspirational speaker Israelmore Ayivor: *Discover a purpose that gives you passion. Develop a plan that makes you persistent. Design preparation that motivates you to optimize your potential. Do it because you love it!*





# **EVER EVOLVING WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE BATTLESPACE**

**"WITH THE EVER-CHANGING  
BATTLESPACE AND EVOLVING  
THREATS, THE MARINES MUST  
ALSO EVOLVE AND ADAPT TO BE  
STEPS AHEAD OF OUR ENEMIES."**





# REBUILDING COMMUNITIES THROUGH PEOPLE-CENTRIC APPROACH

By: SSgt. Norben A. Dondonay PN(M)

Our resolve is always geared towards attaining peace and development in Tausug communities. As part of our mandate, it is with great devotion that we perform our task of being more than just mere combatants but more so as active shareholders in peacebuilding among the communities in our area of operations. We do civic actions. We help the less fortunate individuals. We assist both government and non-government units in the delivery of basic social services. More importantly, we strongly collaborate with different agencies to support and pursue our peace and development initiatives.



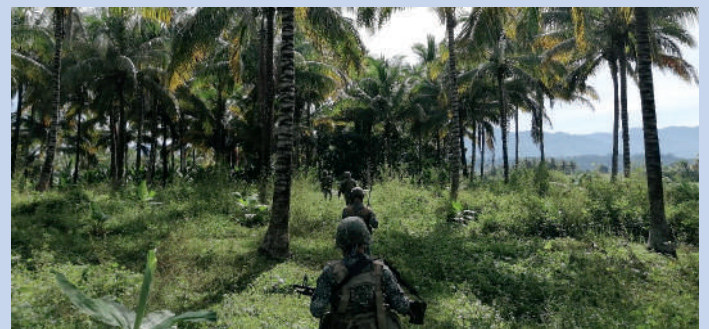
With this, the Marine Battalion Landing Team-7 led by Lt. Col. Eduard C. Olaso PN(M), Commanding Officer, along with our people-centric efforts, continues to conduct All-in-One Missions, facilitate rido settlements, assist community livelihood programs, empower local officials, and enable peace-building activities to sustain our peace efforts in our areas of concern. All these undertakings are realized in close coordination and partnership with key leaders and other stakeholders relative to our continuing endeavors for the promotion of peace and in ending violent extremism.

Likewise, the peace covenant signing with Moro National Liberation Front declaring Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) as persona non grata and turnover of loose firearms serve as testament of this unit's untiring efforts. Our MNLF communities, together with the Local Government Units



of Kalingalan Caluang Municipality, have signified their full support to the AFP for our concerted campaign against the ASG. Indeed, this initiative helped established our good working relationship with the Peace Inclined Armed Groups. This approach has proven once and for all the importance of the whole-of-nation approach in achieving our goal for inclusive growth and development in the communities.





# 35<sup>TH</sup> MARINE COMPANY: PARTNER IN DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT AND SECURITY OPERATIONS

By: Marine Battalion Landing Team-5

Since May 29, 2020, the 35th Marine Company, MBLT-5 has been actively serving the municipalities of Parang and Buldon in Maguindanao in fulfilling the mission of MBLT-5 in COVID-19 prevention, maintenance of peace and order, and Civil-Military Operations.

With the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic at the local level, this unit, in cooperation with the local governments of Parang and Buldon and the local police, has continuously manned municipal quarantine control points. Travel authorities are duly presented to our Marines to ensure that no unauthorized movement of people occurs and the spread of the virus is minimized.

While peace and order is generally manageable, there are shooting incidents that alarm the local populace. The perpetrators are very nimble and familiar with the back roads and alleys that they use in their escape. However, when these shooting incidents occur, the 35th Marine Company is quick in responding in the area within minutes to conduct hot pursuit operations against the perpetrators. In cooperation with local police, checkpoint operations are also intensified. In recent checkpoints, several undocumented firearms have been recovered. Combat patrols are conducted constantly to deter attacks and ensure the area around detachments and patrol bases are cleared of criminality.

Parang is a first-class municipality with commercial establishments, places of worship, and infrastructures that

may be targeted by terrorists. To prevent possible atrocities and establish a strong Marine presence in these locations, the company regularly conducts walk-a-beat patrols in Parang Public Market, Integrated Terminal, Polloc Pier, and Globe and Smart cell sites. The unit also conducts area securities in Our Lady of Mt. Carmel Parish Church on Sundays and Buldon Public Market.

The company also conducts regular Maritime Security Operations (MARSECPAT) in the coastal waters of MBLT-5 AOR with PN vessel BRP Leovigildo Gantioqui (PC-384) and 82nd Marine Company, ABBN to deter smugglers and terrorists from entering the battalion AOR by sea.

In partnership with the local governments, the company organizes Civil-Military Operations to respond to the needs of the people and alleviate their hardships brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. The company participates and lends a hand to institutions in building wash areas, distributing relief goods, and handing out 4P's endowment. The company also provides humanitarian assistance during emergencies such as road accidents and roadblocks brought about by heavy torrential rains.

The 35th Marine Company is in constant movement and vigilance ready to respond to any threat in the AOR, maintain a minimal crime rate, prevent the spread of COVID-19, and fulfill the MBLT-5 mission of Development Support and Security Operations.



# ACHIEVING PEACE AND SECURITY IN LANA DEL SUR – THE 5<sup>TH</sup> MC WAY

By: Marine Battalion Landing Team-5

The 5th Marine Company, Marine Battalion Landing Team-5, which covers four municipalities of Lanao Del Sur namely, Balabagan, Kapatagan, Malabang, and Picong, has gained significant achievements in the past months.

As part of the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) organized to fight the spread of COVID-19, this unit, together with the Philippine National Police (PNP) and the Regional Health Unit, manned quarantine control points along the province's boundaries. The 5th MC, MBLT-5 also participated in several IATF emergency meetings in addressing the pandemic, conducted public information dissemination, distributed relief goods, and services, and provided necessary assistance to those in need.

With limited mobility and economic activities during the COVID-19 pandemic in the past months, the enforcement of community quarantine protocols in several areas helped minimize criminal activities. However, as the quarantine was put under modified general community quarantine, criminal activities including the smuggling of cigarettes have increased. These contrabands are usually transported from Pagadian and Zamboanga to Malabang, Lanao Del Sur, and other areas. From June 2020 to the present, the unit has apprehended smuggled cigarettes worth PHP 5 Million in total.

The rise of rido cases, or local clan conflicts, is also apparent as conflicts erupt from minor skirmishes or long-standing familial disputes over land or other resources. One way of preventing the escalation of rido is through settlement, where feuding parties negotiate and come into agreement with the help of a facilitator and sometimes, a guarantor. For the past several months, this unit has participated in several rido settlements initiated by the municipal government. The unit has contributed to the battalion effort with over thirty-five (35) settled rido cases within its AO.

The 5th MC, together with the PNP, further heightens community security by conducting intensified checkpoint operations to hinder motorists and commuters from carrying firearms. As a result, nine (9) personalities with unlicensed firearms were apprehended in checkpoint operations. The unit also conducted joint law enforcement operations that resulted in either apprehension or neutralization of criminals. These included the neutralization of both Sarao Mangadang, top 1 most wanted, and Jayson Sampiano Deniega A. K. A "Nonoy", top 5 most wanted, in Balabagan Municipality.

In line with MBLT-5's mission of conducting development support and security operations, the 5th MC is dedicated to winning the peace and remaining committed in its mandate despite the challenges in the area.



# MBLT-5 JOINS INTER-AGENCY OPERATIONS WITH SUCCESSFUL RESULTS

By: Marine Battalion Landing Team-5

The area of operation of Marine Battalion Landing Team-5 has its security challenges requiring collaboration and coordination with MBLT-5, Local Government Units, and the Philippine National Police (PNP) through inter-agency operations.

The mission of MBLT-5 is to conduct Development Support and Security Operations (DSSO) in the Area of Operation (AO) in support of the Naval Task Group Central/ 1st Marine Brigade mission. In line with its mission, MBLT-5 has five (5) Lines of Effort namely: **1. Support for Nation Building; 2. Law Enforcement in the fight against criminalities and illegal drugs; 3. Civil-Military Cooperation; 4. Peacebuilding and advocacy; and 5. Application of military force against terrorists and other armed threat groups.**

**In support of nation-building,** MBLT-5, in partnership with Globe Telecommunications, facilitated the establishment of Globe cell sites in the municipal halls of Picong, Lanao del Sur, and Barira, Maguindanao.

For decades, these municipalities had been clamoring for the availability of cellular services but were not granted due to numerous security concerns until the Globe-MBLT-5 partnership materialized, which resulted in the aforementioned accomplishment and the construction of an extensive fiber optic cable network that passes through Parang-Barira-Malabang-Picong. The partnership also includes establishing a similar installation in the municipality of Marogong, Lanao del Sur, which was formerly under MBLT-5 AO. Thus, the communities of said municipalities now have a significant way of communicating as opposed to being left behind and isolated as before.

**In Support of Law Enforcement in the fight against criminalities and illegal drugs,** this unit

participated in numerous inter-agency operations with other government line agencies such as the PNP and the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, which caused the capture of 5.15 kgs and 2 plastic sachets of illegal drugs (shabu) with an estimated market value of **Php 30,724,880.00** and the neutralization of 14 illegal drug personalities (2 killed).

On February 10, 2021, MBLT-5 supported the team of Balabagan Municipal Police Station in serving a warrant of arrest to Jayson Sampiano Deniega @ Nonoy, one of the most wanted criminals (Top 5 in the list) in Balabagan Municipality, who was involved in multiple murder, drug trafficking, and extortion. While @ Nonoy was wounded in the firefight, two of his cohorts managed to elude arrest. The operating troops immediately brought the suspect to the nearest hospital but the subject succumbed to his wounds. The operation resulted in the recovery of two (2) sachets of Methamphetamine Hydrochloride (shabu) weighing 1.6 grams with an estimated value of Php10,880.00, a caliber .38 loaded with six (6) live ammunition and a fragmentary grenade.

On February 18, 2021, MBLT-5 embarked on another support to law enforcement operation when they participated in an inter-agency operation to serve a WOA to Sarao Mangadang at Brgy. Barorao, Balabagan, Lanao del Sur. Mangadang, the Top 1 in the list of most wanted criminals of Balabagan Municipality, was involved in multiple murders, drug trafficking, and extortion activities. During the serving of WOA, Sarao Mangadang and three (3) unidentified cohorts fired at the approaching troops prompting the troops to retaliate. This resulted in a brief exchange of fire and wounding of Sarao Mangadang. Mangadang was brought to Dr. Serapio Montañer Hospital in Malabang, LDS for medical treatment but was pronounced dead on arrival. The operation resulted in the killing of Sarao



Mangadang and the apprehension of Akrudin Mangadang and three (3) unidentified personalities. Confiscated items were one (1) M14 rifle with one (1) magazine and sixteen (16) ammunitions 7.62mm ball, one (1) M16 rifle with one (1) magazine, and ten (10) ammunitions 5.56mm ball.

Another support to law enforcement operation was conducted by MBLT-5 on February 21, 2021, when PNP PRO-BAR served a warrant of arrest to Porok Marandakan Ragundo @ Rokkie, Jacky Abdhul Ona @ Gringo Honasan, and their cohorts, members of the notorious Ragundo Group that are identified supporters of Dawlah Islamiyah Maute Group and involved in multiple murder, rape, and extortion activities in Barira Municipality. No firefight ensued, however, the operation resulted in the confiscation of two (2) units of caliber .45 pistols with magazine and ammunitions, and apprehension of four (4) personalities.

Other than Support to Law Enforcement Operations by way of combat operations, MBLT-5 is also continuous in the conduct of joint random checkpoints in its effort to support law enforcement in the fight against criminality and illegal drugs. Such feat has netted this unit with the following confiscated firearms: seventeen (17) .45 cal. pistols; three (3) 9mm pistols; four (4) .38 cal. pistols; three (3) M16A1 rifles; two (2) M14 rifles; one (1) .30 cal. BAR; one (1) homemade pistolized M79; and three (3) fragmentation grenades.

In support of the local government's drive to prevent smuggling, this unit together with the Philippine National Police was able to capture about Php 12,910,000.00 worth of contraband and arrest 29 smugglers. Some smuggled goods were even escorted by members of the Moro National Liberation Front as they were intercepted by this unit. There was also an instance when smugglers utilized a closed van with a tarpaulin that says "Food Pass LGU Tugaya" fastened to its front hoping that they would be able to deceive the authorities. One of the intercepted smugglers even tried to hide smuggled cigarettes inside ice cases used in transporting seafood.

In support of the anti-illegal logging campaign of the local government, MBLT-5 intercepted about 27,344 board feet of illegal logs in which coordination with DENR and the Philippine Coconut Authority were made for every intercepted shipment. As of the present, 37 illegal loggers were arrested with an estimated total market value of Php 429,240.00.

**On civil-military cooperation.** Before the community quarantine, this unit was able to participate in different CMO activities such as fun run activity, free haircut for children and the elderly, students' walking tour at HMBLT-5, Nationwide Simultaneous Earthquake Drill together with MDRRMO and LGU Kapatagan, bloodletting activity, and MEDCAP/DENCAP activity. Also, the unit participated in polio vaccination, tree planting, and distribution of supplies at the madrasa. This unit was also part of Inter-Agency Task Force for Management of Emerging Infectious Disease (IATF-MEID) activities, relief operations, and radio broadcasting.

**On peacebuilding and advocacy.** It is remarkable that even during a pandemic, many rido related shooting incidents still occur within the AO. Thus, this unit facilitated rido dialogues and settlements while following health standard protocols.

MBLT-5 supported the 1st Marine Brigade's effort to reach out and have a meaningful talk with the Ulamas, Ustadz, and imams within the AO to prevent ISIS-inspired or homegrown violent extremism as well as to solicit the help of these religious leaders in settling rido cases. Being of prime concern, the rido cases in the AO involve a total of 82 feuding families with 11 active, 36 inactive, and 35 successfully settled. This unit will further exert its efforts to minimize, if not eradicate, the occurrence of rido within the AO, thus, step by step, bringing the community closer to winning the peace. Likewise, this unit is actively involved in Municipal/Barangay Peace and Order Council (MPOC) meetings and symposiums on peace and countering violent extremism.

MBLT-5, with its untiring efforts, also participated in the decommissioning of MILF combatants and weapons from August 23 – September 07, 2019, and with the joint inspection with CCCH and IMT to the MILF camp at Brgy. Nabalawag, Barira, Maguindanao on July 16, 2020. On June 21-23, 2020, MNLF members demolished all structures and bunkers of the MNLF camp at Camp Bano Adam. This is a result of extensive and continuous diplomatic negotiation between MBLT-5 and MNLF. On July 16, 2020, the Camp Abubakar as Siddique Detachment under the leadership of Jimmy Balitok, Base Commander, GHQ Base Command, BIAF-MILF, was dismantled and relocated since the Barira-LGU and the local populace are already apprehensive of the presence of the said camp. This achievement was also made possible through extensive and continuous diplomatic negotiations between MBLT-5 and MILF.

With high military discipline and a strong commitment to preventing criminal activities in the area, MBLT-5, with its motto – ONLY OUR BEST, is steadfast in working with the LGUs and other security agencies in conducting Development Support and Security Operations. This is to ensure peace and order within its Area of Operation. MBLT-5 is one with the community in nation-building and peace advocacy and the topmost supporters of community development.





# RESPECTED ORGANIZATION

"LET US CONTINUE TO  
MAINTAIN THE HIGH STANDARDS  
THAT WERE DEMONSTRATED TO US  
BY OUR MARINE FOREFATHERS."



# THERE ARE NO FEMALE MARINES OR MALE MARINES, THERE ARE ONLY MARINES – A TALE OF FEMALE MARINES LEADING AN OPERATION AGAINST ASG

By: 2Lt. Lourdes Victoria D. Sison PN(M)

The Philippine Marine Corps has been enlisting women since 2009. Since then, they have trained alongside men at The Basic School, Marine Corps Force Development Center, Ternate, Cavite, the breeding ground of the *Representative of the Best in Soldierly*, where they are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge needed as they become part of *The Few, The Proud, The Philippine Marine Corps*.

Gradually, the Corps has been continuously adjusting to the presence of the females by deploying them to the operational area. Some battalions have already deployed females to companies and many of these females are now immersed in their areas of operation. Though for Marine Battalion Landing Team-6 (MBLT-6), it was only last August 2020 that females were deployed to a line company. This effort creates an opportunity for women in the Corps to excel in various forms that support the mission of the Corps to provide combined arms units for the conduct of amphibious operations and other operations in support of the mission of the Philippine Navy.

Last April 02, 2021, which was coincidentally Good Friday or “Biyernes Santo” information was received regarding the alleged presence of armed men believed to be Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) members in our area of operations. Accordingly, these personalities asked for food and other necessities from the locals as they established an encampment in the hinterlands of Languyan in the province of Tawi-Tawi. This brought fear and alarm causing the residents to evacuate their homes and abandon their farmlands. Such circumstance was very timely since the rescue of an Indonesian kidnap victim and the neutralization of three (3) ASGs including ASGSL MAJAN SAHIDJUAN @ APO MIKE at Kalupag Island, Languyan, Tawi-Tawi was just recently concluded. Everyone was on high alert and busy making the necessary preparations when Lt. Col. Venjie P. Pendon PN(M), Battalion Commander of Marine Battalion Landing Team-6, looked towards me and asked me one simple question “Vhic, kaya mo ba?”. It was at this moment that a second seemed to last an eternity, as I recalled how many times. I imagined how this opportunity would finally knock.

Being a Marine Officer, I replied with the customary, “YES SIR.” They did not know that those six letters meant that I have long been preparing for this opportunity. He then said, “*Kaya mo yan, you are equipped with the same training and have trained alongside Marines. Just remember TTPs and be careful, it's a risk that I'm willing to take.*” As soon as I heard this, my mind was already set to complete the mission, which was to confirm or deny the presence of ASGs in Brgy. Parang-Pantay, Languyan, Tawi-Tawi. I got out handouts that were always in my chest

rig since Marine Officer Basic Course and read them as a guide. It was the first time that a Female Officer would be leading the NCOs of MBLT-6 in a combat operation and I wanted to set the standard. Leading them wasn't much of a problem since I had already spent time with them during deployment and I was also allowed to undergo the Special Operations Training CL 01 in 2019. A few hours later, the moment of truth had come after having been briefed and upon checking our equipment, we set to depart from the Battalion Headquarters at 03 0100H April 2021 together with the Command Group. I am now spearheading my unit tasked as the main effort in this combat operation.

The anticipation, excitement, and uncertainty were there as we went towards the objective, ensuring that we followed the necessary rules of night movement. Before daylight, the operating elements were already in position so as not to agitate or disrupt the target. Marines carefully observed the persons and the area since we were given the specific instruction not to open fire unless we have sighted firearms or have been fired upon. After a while, upon surveying that no weapons were sighted, we cautiously approached the group and asked the necessary questions. We found out that there are 20 people from Sulu province who have entered the Tawi-Tawi without informing the LGU and the other government agencies. They were then brought to Brgy. Parang-Pantay for proper documentation and processing by the LGU.

The swift and timely reaction of MBLT-6 to the information was applauded by the 2nd Marine Brigade as they ensured the safety and security of Brgy. Parang-Pantay, Languyan and its neighboring communities by confirming or denying the presence of ASG in the area. When the persons were profiled and underwent proper documentation, families in the community went back to their homes and resumed their normal activities. They were very grateful for the prompt response of the Philippine Marines.

Although some would say that this does not qualify for the “*combat standard*” set by fellow Marines, I can proudly say that we completed the mission given by our Battalion Commander. I hope that this is a reminder for Marines, who checked the female box during the application, that the Corps is committed in optimizing our capabilities. Being part of the few, we must continuously prepare so that when opportunity knocks, we can deliver what is expected of being a Marine. As my Battalion Commander said, “*There are no Female Marines or Male Marines, there are only Marines.*” The capability to lead is in every Marine, regardless of gender.” To Lt. Col. Venjie P. Pendon PN(M) and other officers of MBLT-6, thank you for the opportunity and trust.



# MARINE BATTALION LANDING TEAM-6



## WOMEN EMPOWERMENT: FEMALE MARINES AT THE FOREFRONT ON KALUPAG ISLAND

By: Marine Battalion Landing Team-6

*“A woman is an affectionate and caring mother, a devoted wife, a caring daughter, a trustworthy sister, and a loyal comrade—at-arms.”*

The month of March is considered as the International Women's Month. In the Marine Corps, it is not just a month of celebration but also a time to address what needs to be done and maximize the full potential of our female officers and personnel.

Last 19-24 March 2021, during the conduct of the Focus Military Operation against the dreaded ASGSL MAJAN SAHIDJUAN @ APO MIKE on Kalupag Island, Languyan, Tawi-Tawi, Lt. Col. Venjie P. Pendon PN(M), Commanding Officer, MBLT-6 allowed female officer and personnel of MBLT-6 to become part of the operating troops. 2lt. Gabriella Michaela V. Gan PN(M), the OIC of the 56th Marine Company, and the current CEIS (S6) Officer of MBLT-6 is designated as part of the Battle Staff of the Magnificent Sixer's Command Group. The deployment paves the way for the female officer and personnel to realize their full potential as Marines in combat operations. Thus, it proves that a woman could be an integral part of the battlefield – a Marine warrior.

As a warrior, it is demanded that every Marine Fight and every Marine Lead and there could be no other way.

The bond, which grows among warriors who together experience great danger in the crucible of battle, is difficult to describe. It is the steel cable that binds every Marine, one to another, and all Marines to the Corps. That every Marine is a warrior, and a leader is more than a capability: it is an attitude and a standard of excellence.

The females not only participated in the mission planning but also played another important role during the operation on Kalupag Island – they showcase the compassionate side of the Marine warrior by leading the activities during the post-combat operation such as the distribution of relief goods and toys to the residents of Kalupag Island on March 24, 2021. The said activity was focused on the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and the affected residents to ease the post-traumatic experience after a weeklong FMO against the ASG members in their community.

The Marine Corps will remain steadfast in its commitment to ensuring that the men and women who earn the title “Marine” are in the actual battlegrounds and are always ready to serve the country and people.

# TELL IT TO TAWI-TAWI MARINES: LOVING THE LOCALS AND VICE VERSA

Many friends in Tawi-Tawi often suggest that one of the highly respected and well-loved branches of Armed Forces of the Philippines is the Marines. This is how it looks like, at least, in the idyllic province of the Sama people where the Marines were first deployed almost 50 years ago since the province was created in 1973.

Yes, I'm told: the locals prefer the Marines here over other armed services. And yes, the Marines want to be assigned here too, so I'm told. Like lovers of sort, it's a mutual feeling of want and wanting to be wanted.

Over the years, the Marines in this westernmost part of the country have endeared with the local civilian population and their leaders with their multidimensional peacekeeping roles that include protecting civilians, maintaining peace and order, controlling criminality, providing border security, and maintaining a semblance of a strong government in this province.

Aside from playing its standard military role, the Marines here are in fact one of the most sought-after development partners by many non-government and civic society organizations in their various humanitarian activities here for many years. The Marines are just as good as providing and supporting civilian development efforts as they are performing their military functions. As a one-time president of the Rotary Club of Bongao, a station manager of DXNH-FM 94.1 Radyo Kasannangan, and an official of the Mindanao State University-Tawi-Tawi College of Technology and Oceanography, my organizations have worked with the Marines in extending various humanitarian and community outreach activities to many groups and communities.

Others may disagree but the fact that Tawi-Tawi up to this day is the most peaceful province in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao may be attributable to the positive presence of the Marine Corps in this beautiful province. It is this positive presence of the Marines that helps sustain the elusive peace and order that many Mindanao provinces have been longing to have for many years.

However, the relatively stable peace and order condition in Tawi-Tawi did not come without cost and sacrifices for the people of Tawi-Tawi and this armed service of the country. The old folks would talk about the historic battles of Tarawakan and Karundung between government forces and the local rebel movement in the 70s. Those battles accordingly were as intense as they were fierce and deadly.

Many lives were lost on both sides. However, the aftermath of those battles gave rise to the longing and need for peace. It was one of the reasons that the presence of the Marines was deemed necessary here to maintain the peace and tranquility. Decades since those incidents, the Marines did not just play their role of peacekeeping so well but they ended up getting the respect and admirations of the locals, too. Today the Marines are keeping a brigade of two battalions in Tawi-Tawi under BGen. Arturo G. Rojas PN(M) as Brigade Commander.

According to Cpt. Anthony B. Trinidad PN(M), the Civilian Military Officer of the 2nd Marine Brigade based in Sanga-Sanga, Bongao, Tawi-Tawi, the local Marines over the years have performed a leading role in controlling the incidence of transnational kidnapping activities and the trafficking of persons across the borders of the Philippines and its neighboring countries of Malaysia and Indonesia. As a close partner of the Philippine Coast Guard, the Marines play a role too in curbing smuggling activities and in securing its seaports.

In recent years, the presence of the Marines in Tawi-Tawi has become even more important as the Philippines is increasingly involved in border conflict with its neighbors in the West Philippine Sea.

The progressive and peaceful province of Tawi-Tawi will turn 50 in 2023. It is not easily discernible to many but the presence of the Marine Corps has certainly contributed to the continued economic progress of this province by keeping the peace in land and sea, and by so doing has made the Marines – the proud and the few – an ally for peace and progress of the people of Tawi-Tawi.

*A Doctor of Philosophy in English Language Teaching, Dr. Anabel B. Alagasi-Wellms is a full professor at Mindanao State University – Tawi-Tawi College of Technology and Oceanography. She is a former Dean of the MSU-TCTO College of Arts and Sciences. At present, she is the Station Manager of 94.1 DXNH-FM Nutriskwela Radyo Kasannangan and at the same time the Director for Alumni and Career Center.*



# PMCFI



## WELCOMES NEWLY INSTALLED CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER AND COMMITTEE DIRECTORS

By: Marine Corps Center for Leadership and Excellence

The Philippine Marine Corps Foundation Incorporated (PMCFI), a civilian corporation outside the PMC's Chain of Command that aims to strengthen the PMC in its mission of serving the Filipino people, welcomed its newly Installed Chief Operating Officer (COO) and Committee Directors during the Oath Taking Ceremony presided by MGen. Ariel R. Caculitan PN(M), Commandant, Philippine Marine Corps, on 21 1600H March 2021 at the Hall of Flags, HPMC Brown Hall, Marine Barracks Rudiardo Brown, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City.

Col. Romulo D. Quemado II PN(M)(GSC), Commander, Coastal Defense Regiment, was designated as the first PMCFI COO, who will formulate and implement the PMCFI's annual operational strategies; harmonize and synchronize its plans, programs, and projects; and exercise control and supervision on its day to day activities.

Alongside Col. Quemado, several PMC officers also took their oath as designated committee directors who will oversee the respective PMCFI committees. The following PMC Officers were designated as committee directors: Maj. Junnibert S. Tubo PN(M), Deputy, MC7, was designated as the Director of the Linkaging with Meaningful Stakeholder Committee and will subsequently spearhead the committee in scouting, recommending, and engaging with potential partners of the foundation; Maj. Prudencio S. Casas III PN(M), Deputy, MC10, was designated as the Director of the Portfolio Investment Committee and will subsequently spearhead the committee in proposing investment plans for the approval of BOT; Maj. Hasim A. Salih Jr. PN(M), Deputy, MC1, was designated as the Director of the Grants and Resource Mobilization Program Committee and will subsequently spearhead the committee in planning and recommending benefit programs and projects; Lt. Col. Julius F. Colingan JAGS(PN), Staff Judge Advocate, PMC, was designated as the Director of Compliance and Due Diligence Committee and will spearhead the committee in ensuring that all PMCFI investments, grants, programs, and projects are compliant with existing policies; and Maj. Ian R. Villeza PN(M), Deputy, MC5, was designated as the Director of Programs Committee and will spearhead the committee in evaluating existing programs, overseeing program expansion or development, and facilitating board conversation, respectively.

The PMCFI Oath Taking Ceremony was the official jumpstart for the newly installed COO and Committee Directors to formally assume their respective functions and responsibilities. Said Oath Taking Ceremony will empower the committee directors to put into operations their respective committees and to further contribute to strengthening the PMCFI Basic Programs namely: Karangalan, Katungkulan, and Kabayanihan.

The Karangalan (Honor) Programs will cater to limited and selected leadership and professional development opportunities for qualified PMC Officers, Enlisted Personnel and Civilian Resource through the educational program through scholarship, the conduct of leadership development, skills enhancement seminars, and enhancement and preservation of its Marine Traditions of Excellence, Heroism, Loyalty, and the Highest Standard of professionalism.

On the other hand, the Katungkulan (Duty) Programs will cater to the programs of the Foundation that recognizes excellence and innovation and inspire pride and camaraderie among the members of the Philippine Marine Corps including providing facilities, supporting warfighting enhancement capability programs, and other activities that enhance the morale and welfare of PMC personnel.

Finally, the Kabayanihan (Valor) Programs will support the legal dependents of the active personnel who were killed in action during the conduct of actual combat operation or Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) operations, those Civilian Employees who died in the line of duty; and those who are separated from the service through complete disability discharge due to injury incurred during the actual combat or HADR operations.

Hence, as the PMC further thrives towards modernizing its capabilities and evolving into SMARTER Marines, the PMCFI further commits itself to strengthen the PMC in its mandate by supporting its general wellness and organizational growth. Indeed, as the PMC fulfills its mandate to serve the Filipino people, the PMCFI will constantly ensure that it is taking care of those who serve and fight for us—the Philippine Marine Corps.



# “SKILL PATAY” IS GOOD BUT WE NEED MORE

BY: Maj. Ed Leonelle Marvin B. Mapalo PN(M)

“Karangalan, Katungkulan, at Kabayanihan” (Honor, Duty, and Valor) – the strong, challenging, and daring motto of the Philippine Marine Corps. This is the reason we always need brave young blood in the Corps to accomplish missions in the operating areas. The Marine Corps always looks for young, able-bodied people to voluntarily serve the country and be ready to be deployed anywhere to bring glory and prestige to the unit known as the “Representative of the Best in Soldierly” of the AFP. We have proven this bravery from the first amphibious landing in Quezon for the campaign against the Huk up to the campaign in Zamboanga and the Marawi Siege. During the past decades, the Philippine Marine Corps grew with the famous quote “Skill Patay”, which means ready to kill someone, but we needed more to become competent Marines. With the changing operating environment, we need to build more expertise, deepen our cultural awareness, and learn other non-combat skills on the field or in an office.

Expertise can be best described as being knowledgeable in a particular field. The Marines are strong and confident men and women who are willing to go to the battlefield especially down south to fight the enemies. We always look forward to walking in the shadow of death and hunting members of the NPA, BIFF, and Abu Sayyaf. Some Marines fear being assigned to the higher headquarters especially for staff work in the different offices either at the PMC, Philippine Navy, or GHQ. This may also be the case in the other branches of service of the AFP.

The expertise of every Officer and Enlisted Personnel is unique. The bravery of every Marine's heart to fight the enemy is a must to the Corps but the expertise and skills for office work are a different story. We always spend time and money for the schooling of Marine Officers or Enlisted Personnel to increase their knowledge on office work. These schoolings will take most of their time and resources but do not guarantee that they will perform well at the higher headquarters. Also, while in school, their expertise in the last field like being an Artillery, Armor, or Infantry Marine could also wane. A new Marine recruit who is already acquainted with doing office work will find it easy to adjust to the basic training for a few months.

Another needed proficiency is in the medical field, which is helpful especially during a health crisis or pandemic. With growing health concerns, we need more people who have medical training.

We can also recruit new breeds of Marines who are experts in machinery or automotive. These NC2 certificates are already accepted as minimum requirement for application to the Marine Corps.

This way, the Philippine Marine Corps will not be worried about doing administrative office work, medical, mechanics, and other technical expertise that I think will be advantageous not only to the new soldier recruit but also to the organization as a whole.

Culture is one of the most important part of being a member of the Corps. This includes unique customs, art, social institutions, and achievements in general. It binds and improves camaraderie amongst members of the unit. It also enables a new recruit who is an expert in office work, medical, or mechanics to adapt to the new work environment and have a sense of belonging.

Some Marines may feel differently when they are not assigned in the combat area. However, this should not diminish the standard of being a true Marines. Being a true Marines is to always bring stories of glory and victory to the Corps. There are numerous Officers and Enlisted Personnel in the Philippine Marine Corps who are not even once exposed to a firefight but they are good and credible leaders of the Corps as well as to the other branches of service of the AFP. Some have assumed high positions in the AFP because they were able to adapt to the culture of being a true Marines in their training, although I am sure that it has been a bloody sweat experience earning the respect of being a true Marines.

Last is the legacy of being Marines. Majority of the Officers and Enlisted Personnel in the Philippine Marine Corps foresee what they can offer. It is known as a legacy. We cannot argue over the legacy of someone who had the opportunity of engaging in an actual encounter. But how about the legacy of writing a paper like a position paper

or a concept paper? A medical practitioner that can move and help Marines and other people? Or a mechanic or automotive specialist who can improve the Marine Corps technologies? I think it is also considered to be a legacy because the legacy of how things work around us depends on how we view ourselves to be productive and useful to the organization. It is based on how an individual Marine can contribute to the organization and give something they will and can remember them by – either on the field or the productive things they do that can benefit the Philippine Marine Corps and the AFP as a whole.

With expertise and skills for the “Skill Patay” mindset, I strongly advocate transforming the qualification of the Officers and Enlisted Personnel of the PMC to include technical expertise in office work, medical, mechanics, and others for a higher level standard recruitment. I advocate for the change of course in the PMC’s recruitment. Again, the consideration for expertise, culture, and legacy during the hiring of new breed of soldiers for the PMC can improve not only the Philippine Navy but also the AFP in general.



# A MARINE WAY...

“It is nice to become but hard to be one” – words that caught my attention that was hung in one of the big trees that welcomed the Marine Reservists Orientation Training Class 2 of 2021 at The Basic School at Camp Gregorio Lim in Ternate, Cavite. The moment we stood in front of that sacred ground, I was wondering why I am here, why now, and what will be next after this. It is almost late when we arrived at the camp. We set up our base camp at the back of the cottages along the seashore while having initial instructions from the sirs, top, sarge and all marines that guided us. An overwhelming feeling was murmured, “This is it my friends! We are now in Ternate where the few and the proud hone and grow! Yes! We did it our way to be here despite the challenges. Well, good luck to all of us!”

of sweat came out wearing this green digital brown cargo battle dress uniform and comforted by dipping deep down the sea after such hard work; yet, it was fulfilling navigating and firing, walking up and down the hill and the battle field. The tall trees and roots that surrounded me and the green leaf that blooms were the only witness to my weary body that hydrating of water is almost heaven to me. In my heart, we appreciate that a Marines’ life is not easy. But then, why are these people inside the camp the conqueror of this misery? As the days went by and I exchanged conversations with the soldiers I met, I gained insight that poverty led them into this ground. Most of them won the battles of life because it is the reality; as their dream came true, their cheerful heart rejoices with pride too.

The night was full of bright stars with hymns of voice from different sides; the commands of some who were still marching in while others were having their lectures. The feeling of weary and a hesitant smile, while carrying weapons anytime. Some were in charge of duty in a buddy system shifting duties from time to time even at night in placid and serenity that rhyme. While the heavy M-16 rifle, helmet, and suspender to hold the magazine were always on our side, we realized that we had to be watchful all throughout day and night, it is the marine way... to live by. Heavy drops

As I am now starting to miss my family and friends, mesmerized by these words to let the night pass by. The life of a marine reflects the passion that one has to protect and give unselfishly his love for the country. If not WE as it should be, then who will it be? A blissful sacrifice... a true essence... such is a Marines’ life. I am proud, I am fulfilled, I am one of the Marines. From this day onward, this will be my way, our way, our journey. The teary eyes of mine in a joyful heart will say...I have found forever. MARINES! Horraaaah!!!



*SSgt. Mary Grace A. Penetrante PN(M)(Res)  
751st Marine Company Reserve*





# THE LINE OF FIRE IS ALWAYS A PLACE OF HONOR

The story began with fourteen strong men and women of Bicol from all walks of life who came together to persevere, endure, and overcome the longest seven days of their lives inside the training ground of the Few, the Proud. They had been told that no men and women could ever wear the most sacred emblem of a marines without passing through the hollow ground of The Basic School in Ternate, Cavite. To these fourteen men and women from the Provinces of Sorsogon and Albay, their aspirations to become a full-pledged marine reservists were riddled with great trial and obstacles enough to lay waste to ordinary people. But to these fourteen, who came to Ternate, they were ordinary men and women with an extraordinary calling. Before there were fourteen, there were twenty-one. When the Naval Reserve Center Southern Luzon called to consolidate enlisted personnel to undergo the Marine Reservist Orientation Training (MROT) spearheaded by the Retirees and Reservists Affairs (MC9), volunteers from Sorsogon lined up to take on the challenge. However, since the training was conducted amidst the on-going Covid-19 pandemic, many volunteers eventually beg off. Three volunteers from the Province of Albay signified their intention to join. MROT Class 02-21, with twenty-one strong men and women, were convened and online lectures began. In spite of the distance and time, the facilitators, lecturers, and MROT Class 02-21 somehow made it through. Some days were lenient, but other days were difficult in terms of students not making it to the lecture on time nor being able to take the exam because of internal and external factors. Marchers were assigned every lecture day and when you were assigned as a marcher it is doubly stressful on your part to know the whereabouts of your classmates who were not present and who were missing in action. However, this made the class more responsible for each other, more compassionate, and more bonded like brothers and sisters. Sadly, some of our brothers chose to stay behind until we were fourteen.

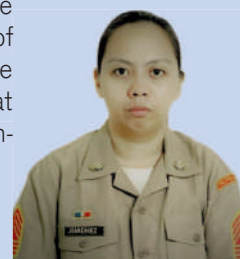
Just like in any battle, a week before leaving Bicol for Ternate, preparations were made and everything was planned out. The fourteen knew that when they chose Ternate, they chose to leave the comforts of their home, the warmth of their loved ones, their respective stature, and

their life as they know it. They knew that from the moment they left for Ternate, they will be each other's family. They knew that they had to support each other whether it be financially, physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. Some were still questioning themselves why they wanted to go through the training, while others were mentally preparing themselves to do whatever it takes to get it over with.

But just like a light switch, when the fourteen men and women from the tip of Luzon first stepped on the sandy road of Camp Gregorio Lim, they focused their attention to working together, supporting each other, taking the lead when the others were weary, and carrying on even if the burdens were heavier than the last obstacle they surpassed. They knew that their combined strength was so much stronger than the hardships they face in their training. All stripped of their most prized possessions, they were wealthy with the comrades they saw in each other's eyes, in each other's cry for willpower, and in each other's call for triumph even when the going got tougher and tougher. Nothing had prepared them for Ternate but these fourteen men and women knew that the aspiration they hold in their heart was one and the same. It was no longer about finishing the training, it is surviving together, with no men nor women being left behind. This gave them the sense of purpose to overcome the Mount Olympus of Ternate even when every day the stake was becoming higher and steeper. The fourteen were no longer the fourteen but were the members of MROT Class 02-21 represented by their highest ideal – to serve their country with everything they have even when the risk was high.

On the day of the emblem pinning ceremony, all fourteen stood with "battle" scars but none were scared anymore.

N.B. The title of this article is culled from the famous quote of Supreme Court Associate Justice Marvic Leonen during his speech at the 2019 Bar Exam Passers Oath-taking Ceremony.



*MSgt. Lina G. Jimenez PN(M)/Res/*



# OPERATIONALIZING THE ARCHIPELAGIC COASTAL DEFENSE: PMC'S NEW BATTLEFRONT

By: Col. Danilo T. Facundo PN(M)(GSC)

## Command Guidance

When Commandant MGen Ariel R. Caculitan PN(M) declared his Command Guidance for 2021, he made a strong emphasis on Archipelagic Coastal Defense (ACD). The ACD serves as the overarching concept on how the Marines should operate being part of the naval and joint force, while adapting to the current and future operating environment. This is anchored on the Philippine Navy's Active Archipelagic Defense Strategy (2013) and the GHQ's National Military Strategy (2019) and Joint Operating Concept (2020).

## The Archipelagic Coastal Defense Concept

Though the ACD concept is new for the Philippine Marine Corps (PMC), this is not a novel concept among our neighboring countries in the region such as Japan and South Korea that have expanded their coastal defenses to counter adversary's aggressive posturing near their sea areas.

It will take a multitude of resources to fully realize the PMC's ACD concept but with proper planning and sharp execution, this will not be impossible especially that the PMC is departing from its old traditional land-centric warfare. Through the Marine Operating Forces (MOF), the ACD will be performed with seaward, landward, and supporting maneuvers and will have integrated sensors; robust command and control; mixed fires including shore-

based anti-ship missile system, shore-based air defense system, multiple launch rocket system, man portable air defense system, and howitzers; coastal maneuver forces; and support and sustainment.

To complement the fleet forces and other naval units in anti-access/area denial (A2/AD), sea control, and maritime security operation including mine warfare operation, the MOF shall perform ACD seaward maneuvers capable of sinking enemy ships from the shore to protect the fleet, intercepting and taking down hostile aircrafts, missiles and rockets, and performing decisive counter-landing operations. The MOF is expected to do landward maneuvers particularly island to island operation and amphibious maneuver to support the Army Forces in the conduct of ground and special operations. It will also support the Air Forces in securing their forward air refueling points and air defense missions. In addition, MOF will complement the efforts of other government agencies through its littoral maneuver capabilities supporting border control, maritime law enforcement, other constabulary operations, and humanitarian assistance and disaster response.

The PMC will modify its future force structure and capability development to realize this goal. While traditionally the marine infantry is at the center of the MOF capability performing ground operations with fires and other combat and service support units around it, the MOF in geographical deployments for external defense may consider the mixed fires as the core capability with coastal



maneuver forces and other combat and service support units around it. Still, however, there will be dedicated MOFs as National Maneuver Amphibious Force for rapid response nationwide.

### **Operationalizing the ACD Concept**

The Philippines' strategic geography necessitates an effective strategy that will enable it to defend its archipelagic state. With the ACD concept on hand, its successful implementation requires enlisting the support of various institutions and sectors including Congress, local governments, academe, defense think tanks, industries, and the media. The recent publication by PMC of the declassified document, *In Defense of our Maritime Nation: The Archipelagic Coastal Defense Concept*, is a first

step as it informs the general public about ACD and issues a call to action that the defense of our maritime nation is a responsibility shared by every Filipino. There is a need to popularize the concept through sustained information operation to generate more support and send a strong signal that we are serious on this front. The PMC is also slated to conduct a Force Design and Concept of Support Development Workshop to have an in-depth analysis and planning aimed at developing appropriate and responsive future force structure and defense strategies in support of the Unified Command's campaign plans.

Operationalizing the ACD concept is no easy task but the current security environment makes it imperative to ramp up our coastal defenses. This is a geopolitical necessity that requires a full spectrum of support.





# Enhanced Marine Corps Multi-purpose Cooperative

1. The Philippine Marine Corps Multi-Purpose Cooperative with its slogan, "We grow together as One," under the leadership of our Commandant, MGen. Ariel R. Caculitan PN(M) recently conducted series of dialogue/conferences with the management and Board of directors of Marine Corps Multi-purpose Cooperative composed of selected Marine Corps Staff to further study and enhance its services to cater the needs of PMC personnel and dependents.
2. As a result of the dialogues, the Marine Cooperative hereby offers the following services and products to its members:

## **CREDIT SERVICES**

### **A) Regular Loan/ Salary Loan**

- 1) With 6.8% interest per annum
- 2) Longer terms of payment up to 5 years to pay
- 3) Accepts buy-out loan
- 4) Fast loan transactions guaranteed

(Note: With Patronage Refund given to members who had availed loans)

Minimum Loanable amount of P50,000.00  
Maximum Loanable amount of P300,000.00

Private - P100,000.00  
PFC - P200,000.00  
Cpl - P300,000.00

Personnel with 4th long pay (Officer/EP) P500,000.00 (subject for approval)

"Principal amount of Loan will be your Net Loans Proceeds"

### **B) Savings Deposit Program**

- 1) With 3% interest per annum
- 2) Interest will be credited to members passbook every 30th of June and 31st of December of every year.
- 3) Withdrawal of interest starts from the First Friday of the next month.

### **C) Time Deposit Program**

- 1) 4% interest per annum 1 year lock in
- 2) 5% interest per annum 2 years lock in
- 3) 6% interest per annum 3 years lock in

## D) Military Supplies

- 1) With discount for MARCOOP members
  - 2) With additional discount for bulk orders
  - 3) Open for consignment for MARCOOP members only
3. The mandated Board of Directors is based on the position in the PMC Organization and shall have the following composition:

|          |   |                  |
|----------|---|------------------|
| CPMC     | - | Chairperson      |
| DCPMC    | - | Vice Chairperson |
| CMS      | - | Director         |
| MC1      | - | Director         |
| SMCFDC   | - | Director         |
| MC10     | - | Director         |
| CO, CPMU | - | Director         |
| CSM      | - | Director         |
| ACSM     | - | Director         |

4. The following are the new set of MARCOOP Officers CY 2021-2022 and their functions and responsibilities is stipulated in Republic Act 9520 "Philippine Cooperative Code of 2008 and MARCOOP By-Laws".

|    |                                |               |
|----|--------------------------------|---------------|
| 1. | MGEN ARIEL R CACULITAN PN(M)   | Chairperson   |
| 2. | BGEN RAUL JESUS L CALDEZ PN(M) | V-Chairperson |
| 3. | COL LARRY C BATALLA PN(M)(GSC) | Director      |
| 4. | COL JOEL M LAZO PN(M)(GSC)     | Director      |
| 5. | COL EDWIN E AMADAR PN(M)(GSC)  | Director      |
| 6. | COL BLADIMER B CALUYA PN(M)    | Director      |
| 7. | MAJ JOEY BRIAN C OTGALON PN(M) | Director      |
| 8. | CMS Antonio O Limitares PN(M)  | Director      |
| 9. | MSgt Renato R Barcia PN(M)     | Director      |

### **MANAGEMENT:**

**COL LARRY C BATALLA PN(M)(GSC)**  
General Manager

**Ms. Leizl L. Rodriguez**  
Lending Manager

**Ms. May Lynn B. Rico**  
Office Clerk

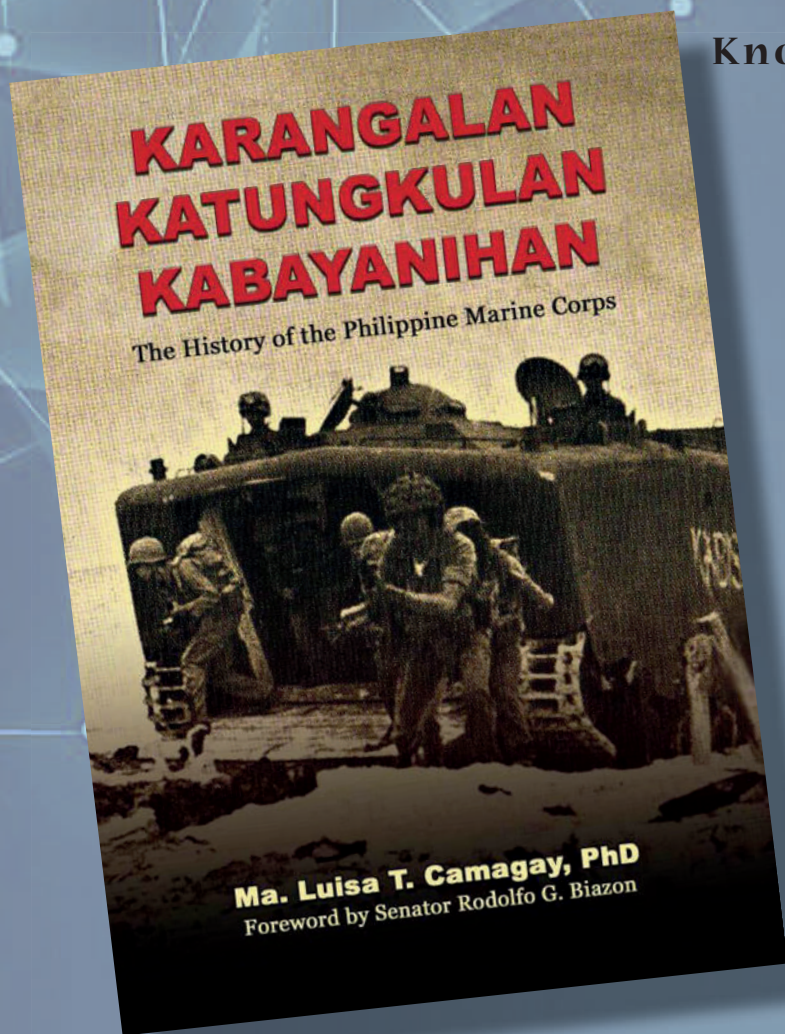
5. This Time, Marine Cooperative is different, its enhanced services will be delivered to the members even if they are in their respective units/station in order to suffice the needs of its members. With its new set of trusted and respected MARCOOP Officers and in the supervision of the Command Team headed by MGen. Ariel R. Caculitan PN(M), I can assure the enlisted Corps across the country that this noble undertakings will benefit not only the regular and associate members but our beloved Marine Corps as well.

6. Moreso, in the essence of setting an example, I as the current Assistant Command Sergeant Major and member of the Board of Directors of MARCOOP, personally deposited a certain amount and transferred my capital contribution from other AFP Financial institution amounting to Php 3,000.00 as my monthly capital contributions in favor of the Cooperative, to prove to everyone that the Command Team is seriously establishing our own cooperative. So, what are you waiting for, let us beat the inflation rate by becoming a member of MARCOOP and be part of attaining our Vision that "MARCOOP shall be a One Billion Worth Capital Cooperative by 2030 supportive to the financial needs of our members, the Marine Corps Organization and its community". Let us patronize our very own Cooperative and be a beneficiary of MARCOOP's services and products. For more information, contact us at 09198033527 smart and 09162944108 globe. Keep safe everyone, God speed.

*Personal Testimony By: MSgt. Renato R. Barcia 802786 PN(M), member of 259th Marine Basic "Warrior" Course Class of 1996 and AFP Sgt Major Course Class 16-2018 at AFPETDC. Former Assistant Sgt Major of Naval Reserve Command, and presently Assistant Command Sgt Major of the PMC.*

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## MARINE BASIC COURSE (MBC)

### Qualifications

- At least 18 years old and not more than 25 years old
- Must be a natural born Filipino Citizen and of good moral character
- Single, never been Married and has no child of his/her own
- Completed the K-12 or at least 72 units in college (preferably technical courses) or TESDA NCII for old curriculum high school graduates
- At least 5'0 (60 inches)
- Must have no tattoo

### Initial Requirements

- PSA Birth Certificate
- K-12 Diploma / TESDA Diploma
- Transcript of Records
- 2 x 2 Picture (White Background)

## NAVAL OFFICER CANDIDATE COURSE (NOCC)


### Qualifications


- At least 20 years old but not a day older than 25 years old on date of admission
- Must be a natural born Filipino Citizen and of good moral character
- Single, never been Married and has no child of his/her own
- Graduate of 4-years baccalaureate degree (preferably technical course)
- At least 5'0 but not more than 6'4
- Must have no tattoo

### Initial Requirements

- PSA Birth Certificate
- College Diploma
- Transcript of Records
- 2 x 2 Picture (White Background)

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# KARANGALAN KATUNGKULAN KABAYANIHAN

